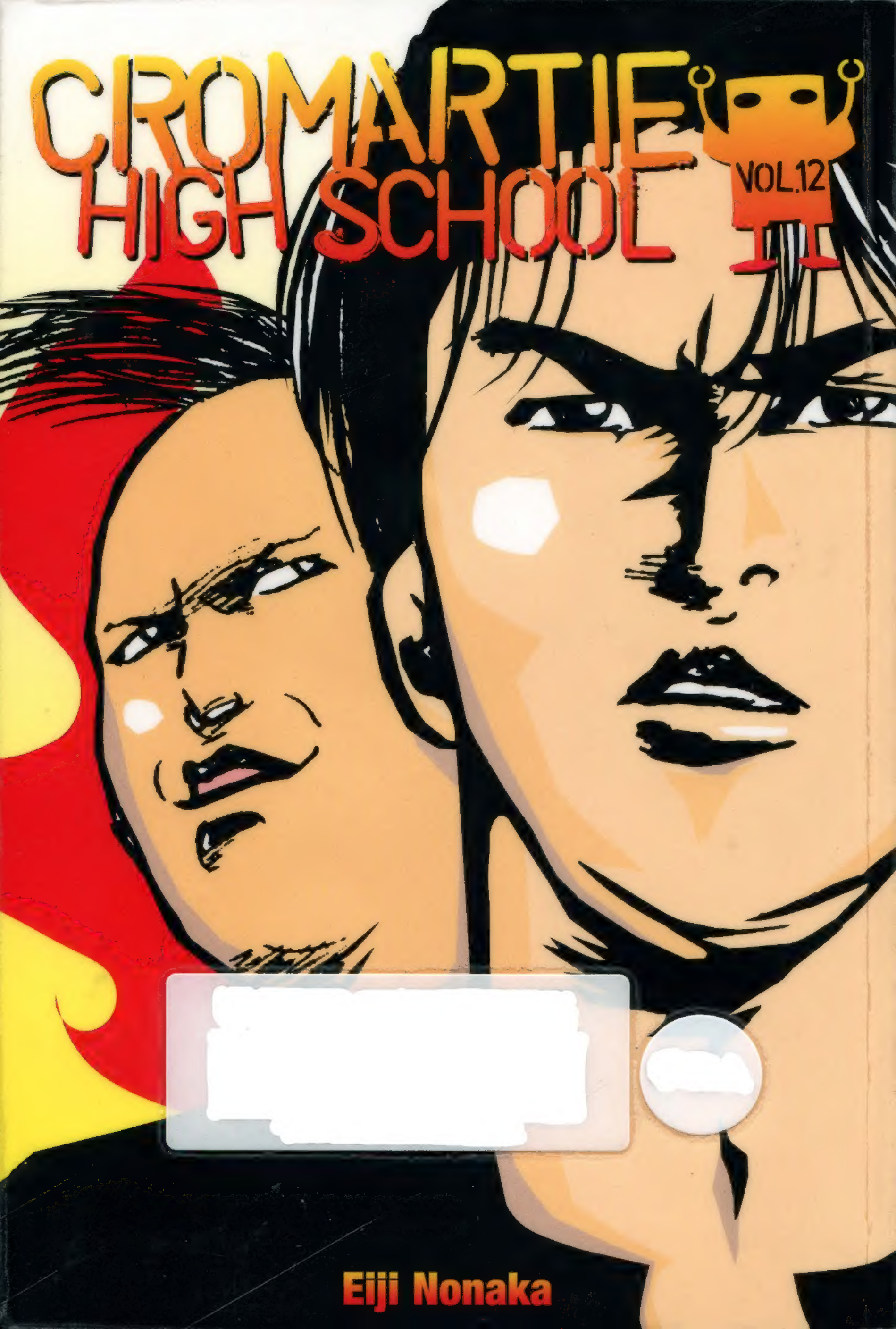


CROMARTIE HIGH SCHOOL



Eiji Nonaka

CROMARTIE HIGH SCHOOL



Summer has descended upon Cromartie High, and the students are lining up to take off their clothes...

...to join the school sumo club. Masked Takenouchi becomes the club's rising star, and the Four Great Ones (all five of them!) find themselves impromptu goodwill ambassadors, explaining the finer points of loincloths to a series of foreign guests. You know you're curious.

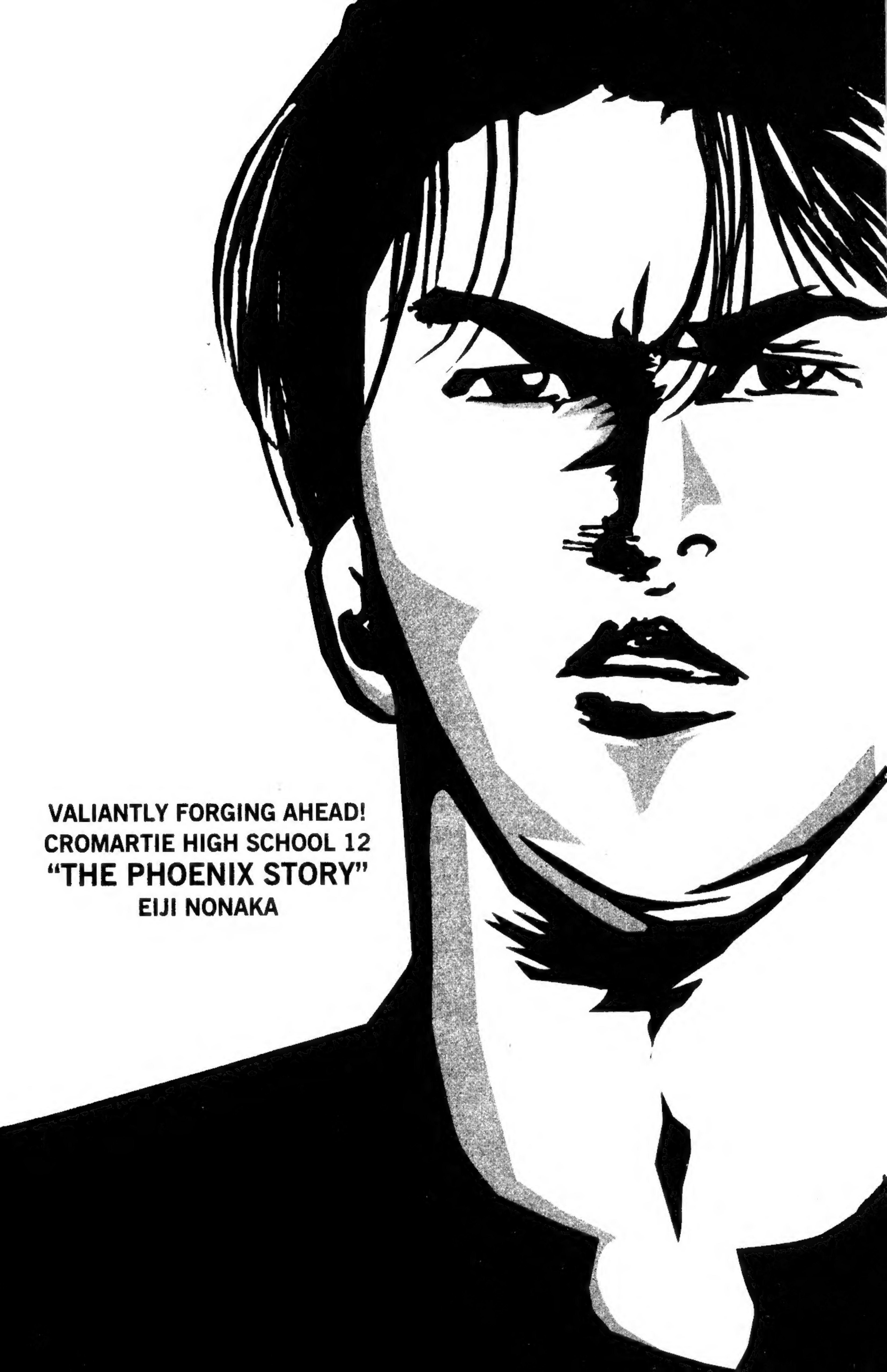


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VOTE HONEST! VOTE GORILLA!





**VALIANTLY FORGING AHEAD!
CROMARTIE HIGH SCHOOL 12
"THE PHOENIX STORY"
EIJI NONAKA**

CHAPTER 239: **GIRLS ON FILM**

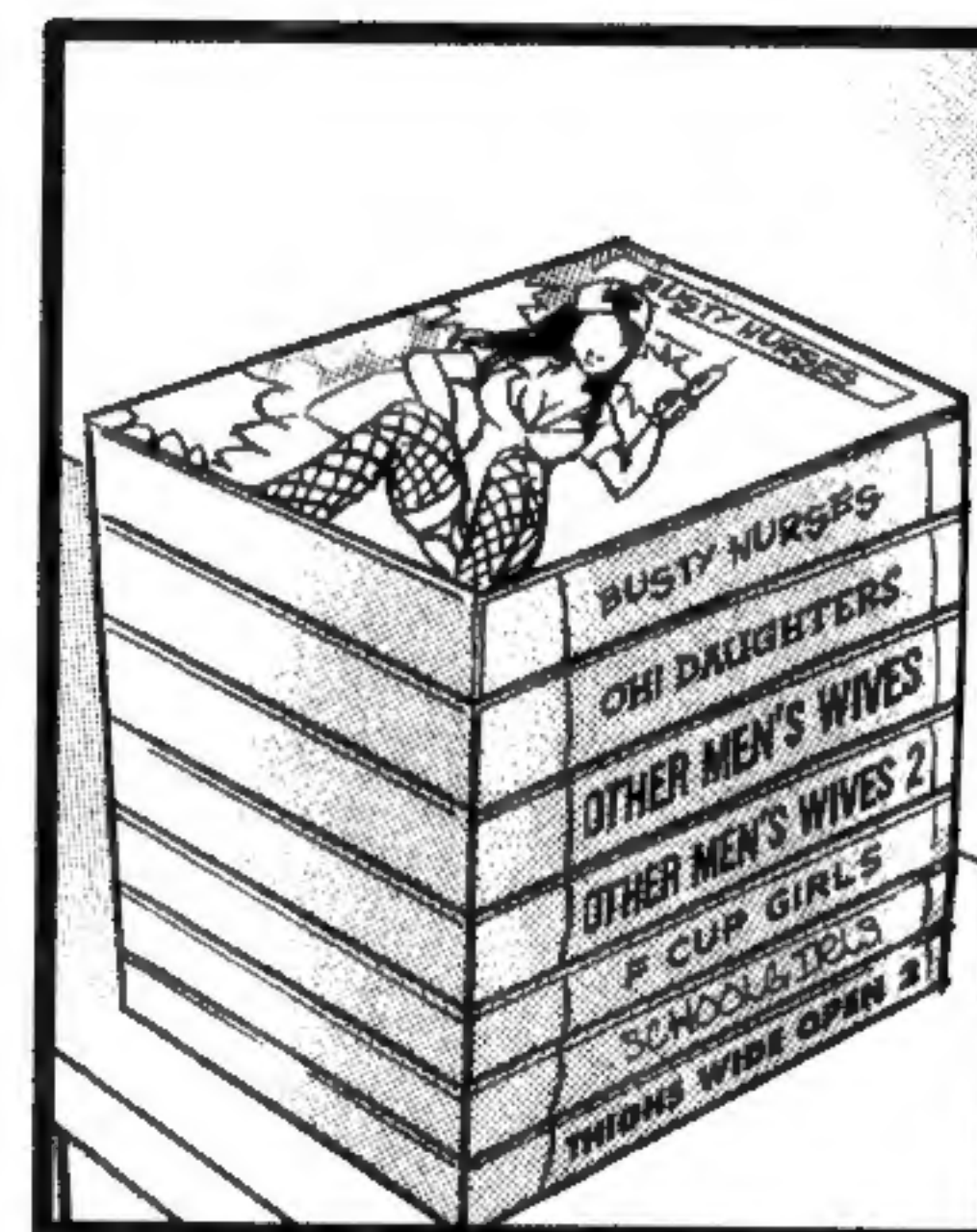
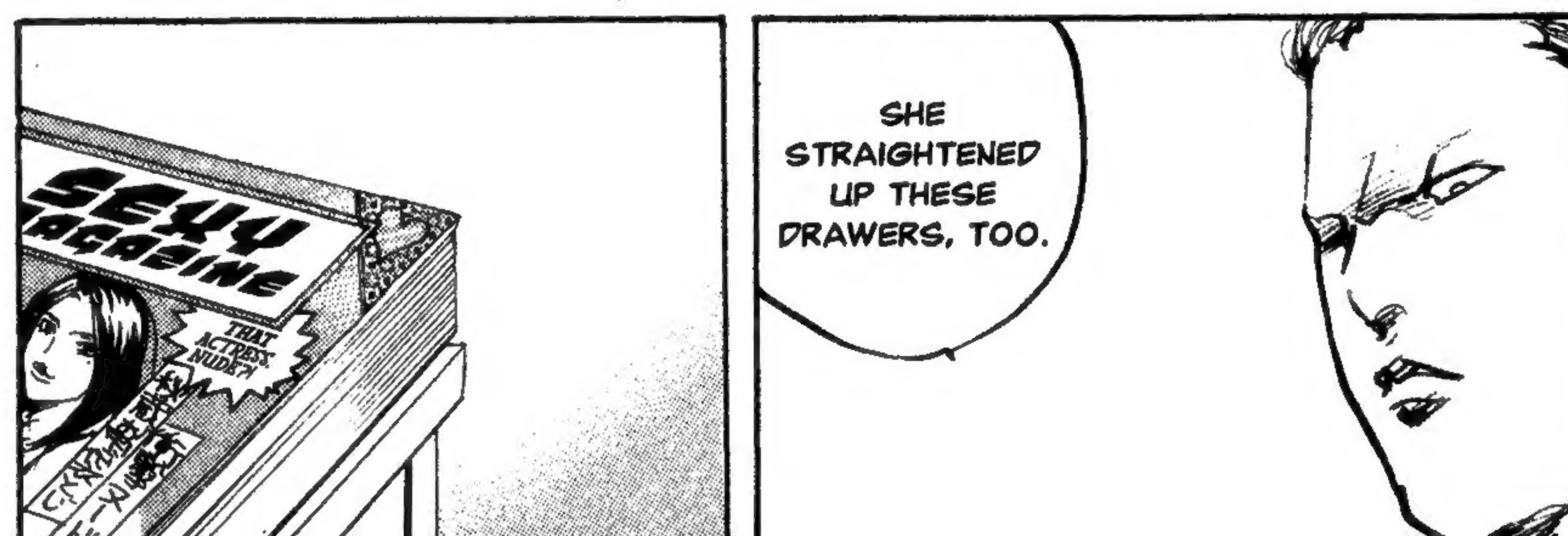
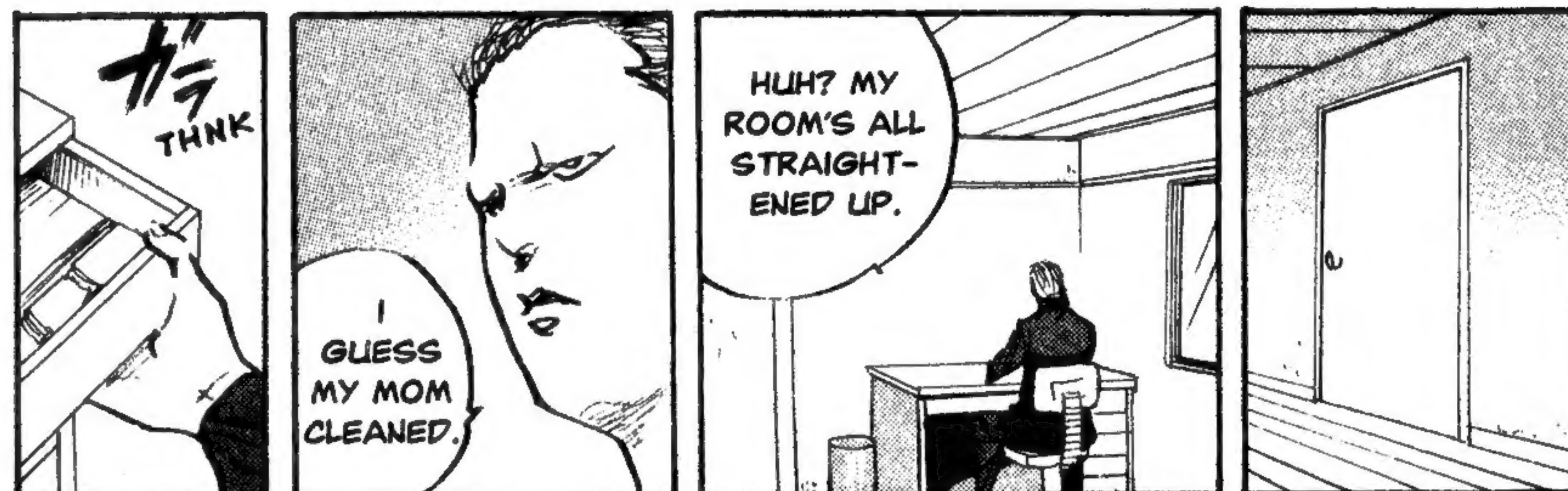
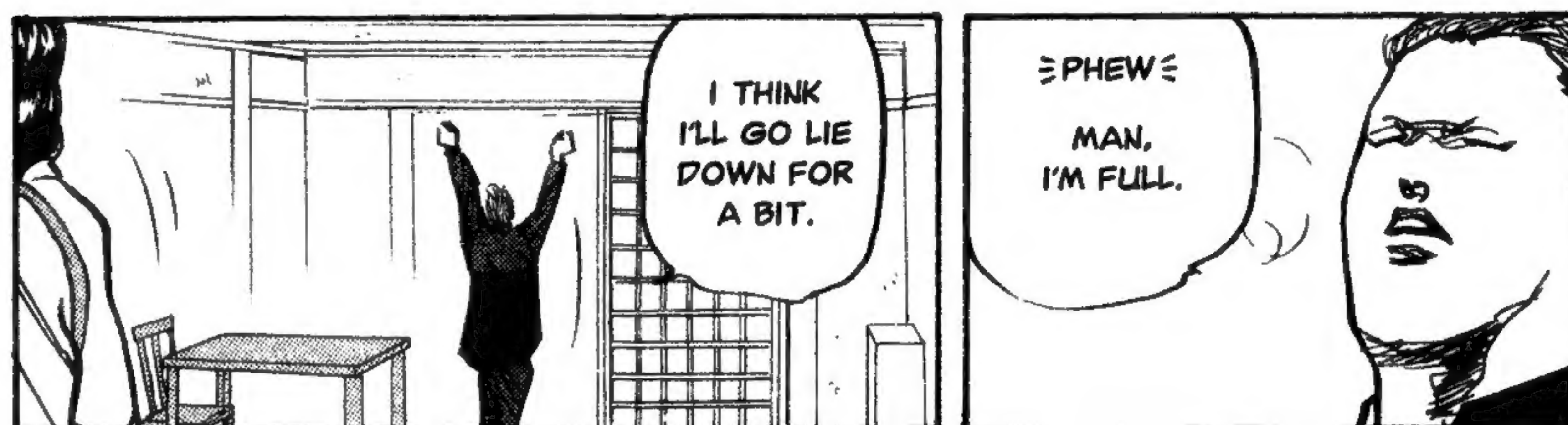
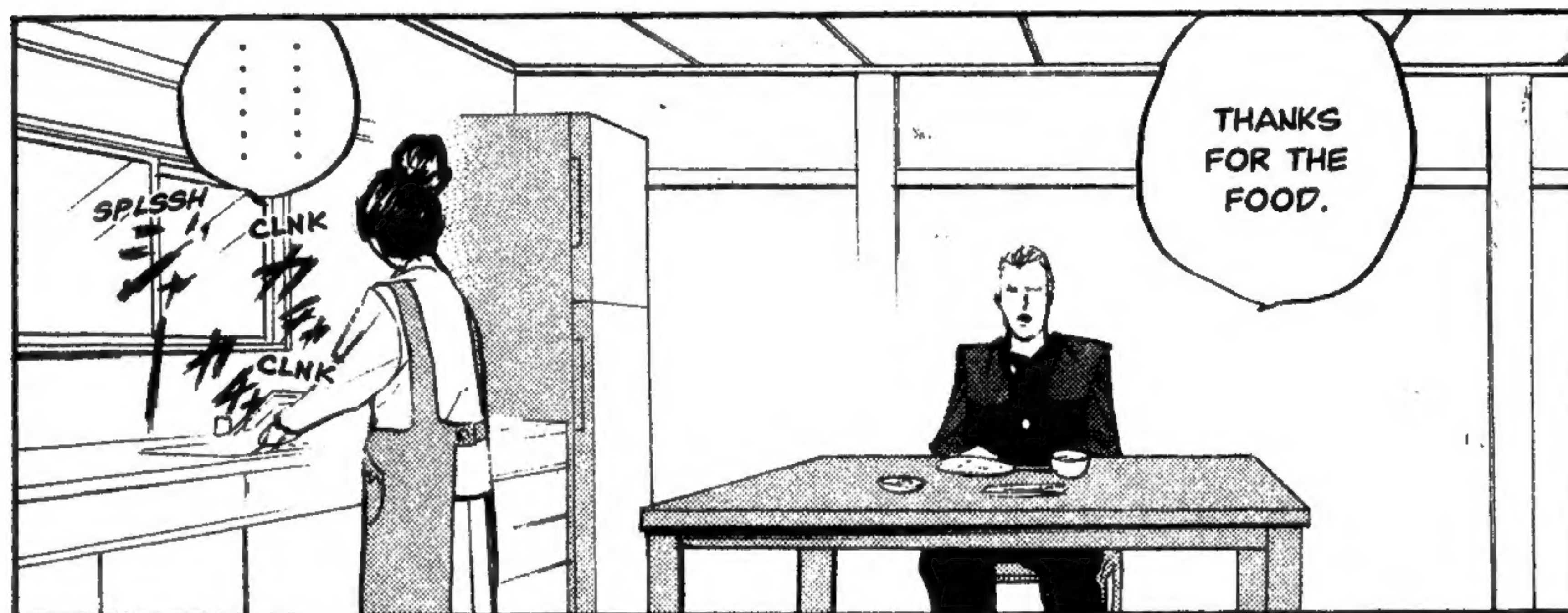
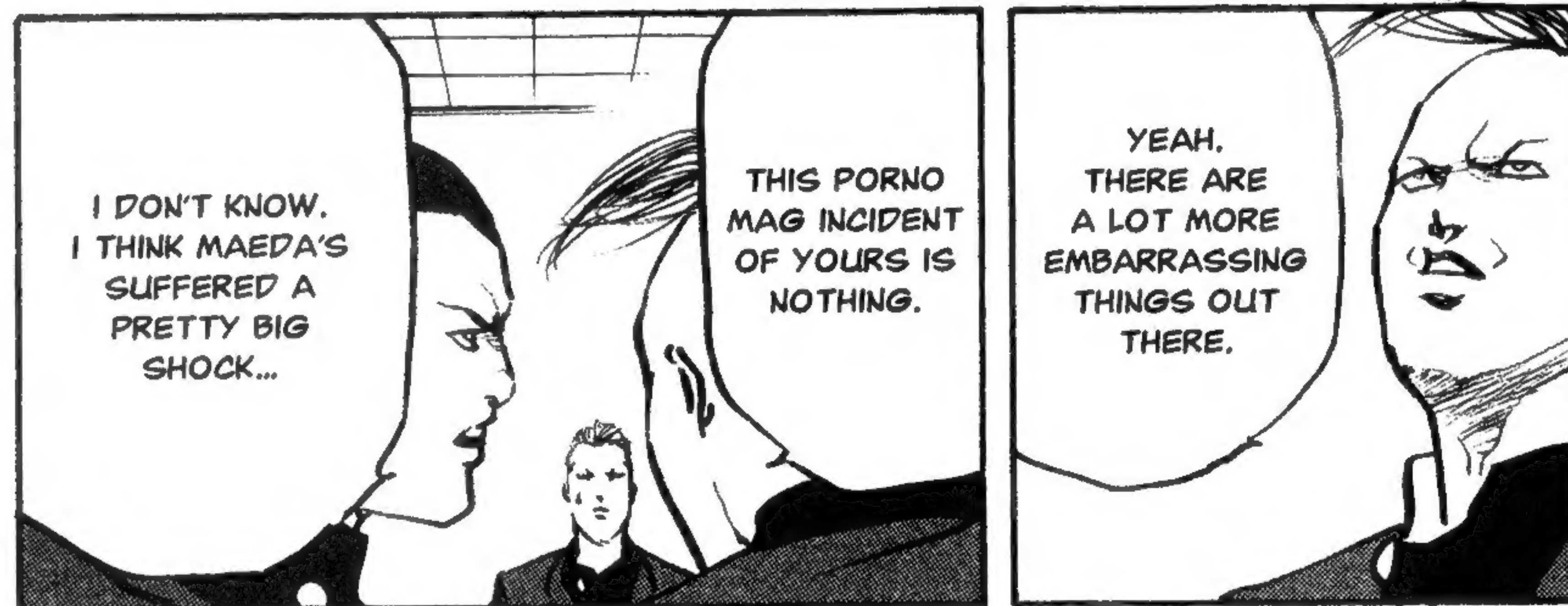
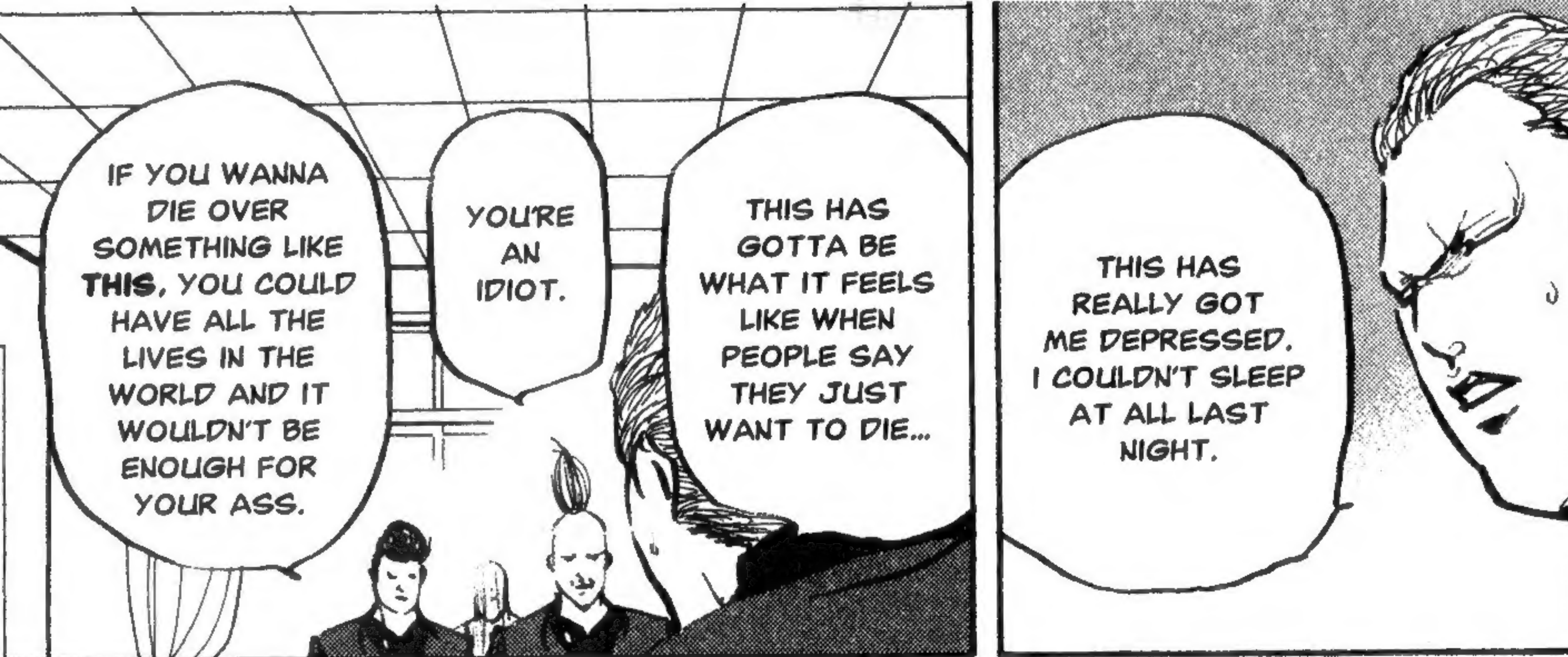


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DO YOU MIND?

I GUESS THEY HAD A LOT OF CATCHING UP TO DO. THEY WERE CHATTING AND GETTING ALL EXCITED AND STUFF.

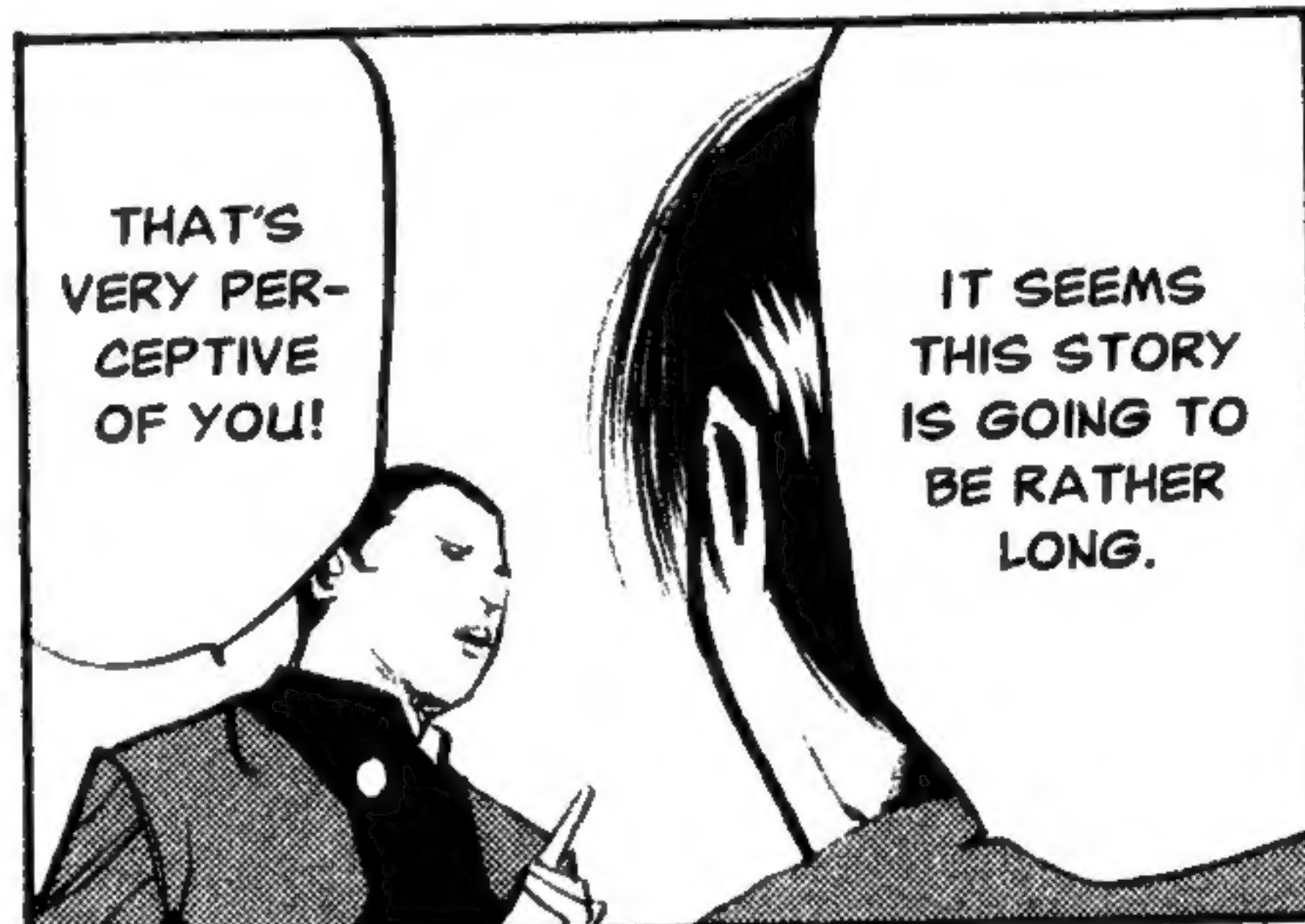


OH, AND THE TWO GIRLS WERE OLD FRIENDS WHO HADN'T SEEN EACH OTHER IN A LONG TIME.



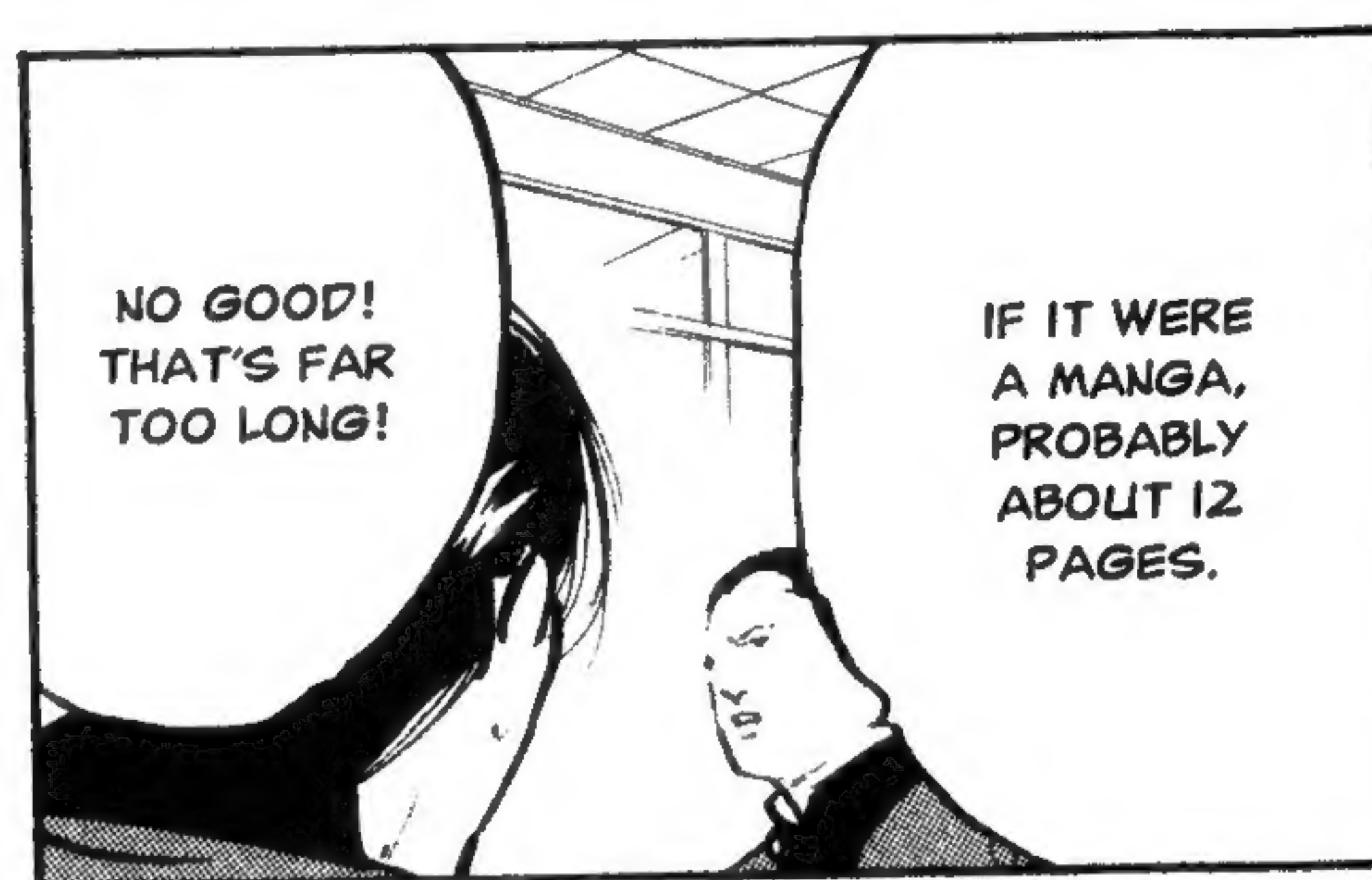
AH, EXACTLY HOW LONG?

YES, IT IS A PRETTY LONG STORY.



THAT'S VERY PERCEPTIVE OF YOU!

IT SEEMS THIS STORY IS GOING TO BE RATHER LONG.



NO GOOD! THAT'S FAR TOO LONG!

IF IT WERE A MANGA, PROBABLY ABOUT 12 PAGES.

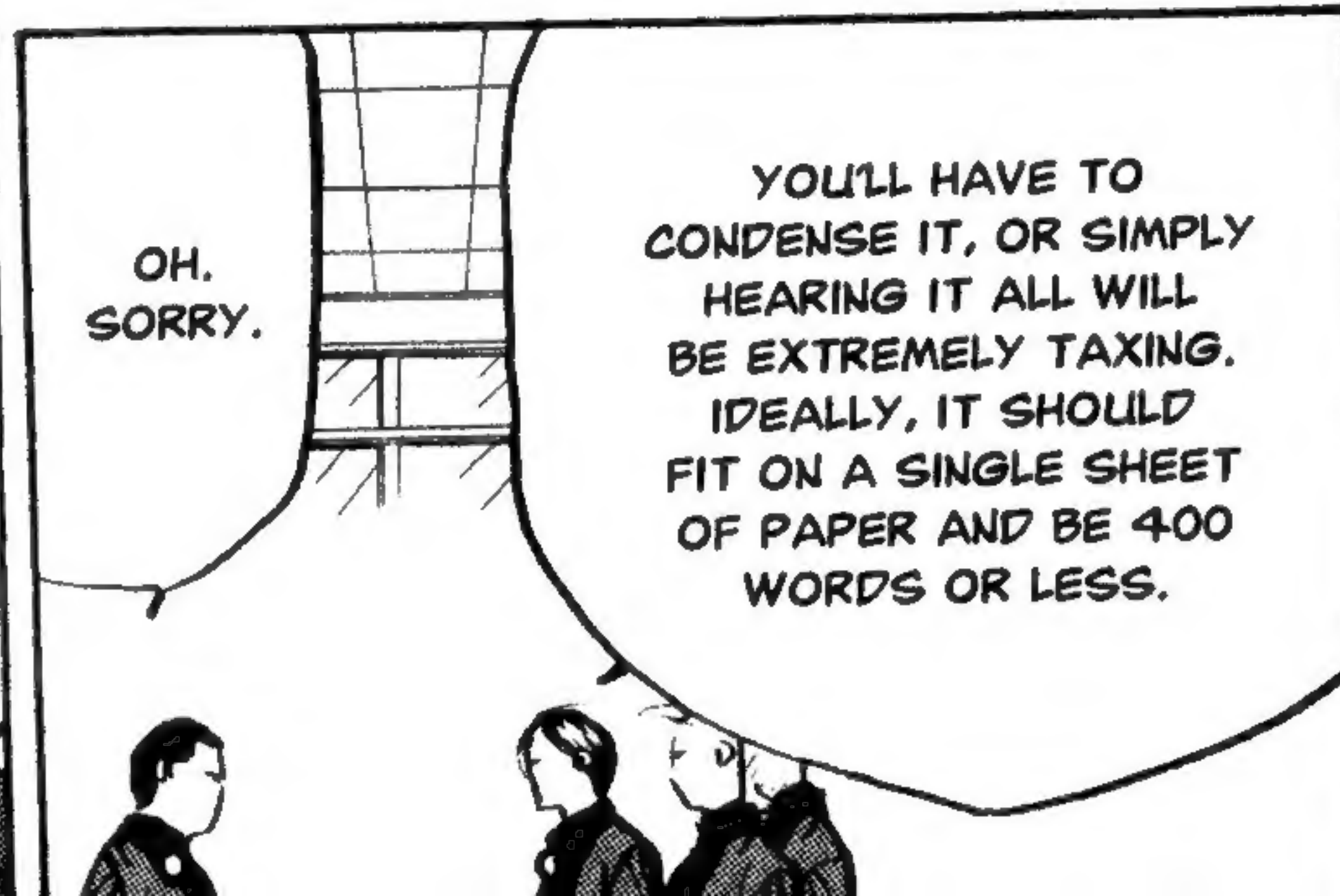


WELL, LET ME SEE...



LET'S HEAR IT, HAYA-SHIDA.

FINE! I'VE GOT A SHORT STORY THAT'S JUST THE THING!



OH, SORRY.

YOU'LL HAVE TO CONDENSE IT, OR SIMPLY HEARING IT ALL WILL BE EXTREMELY TAXING. IDEALLY, IT SHOULD FIT ON A SINGLE SHEET OF PAPER AND BE 400 WORDS OR LESS.



HEY, DAMMIT! THIS SOUNDS SORT OF LIKE YOU'RE INSULTING MY FAMILY!

I COULD HANDLE IT IF IT WAS MY MOM, BUT **MAEDA'S** MOM? NO WAY.

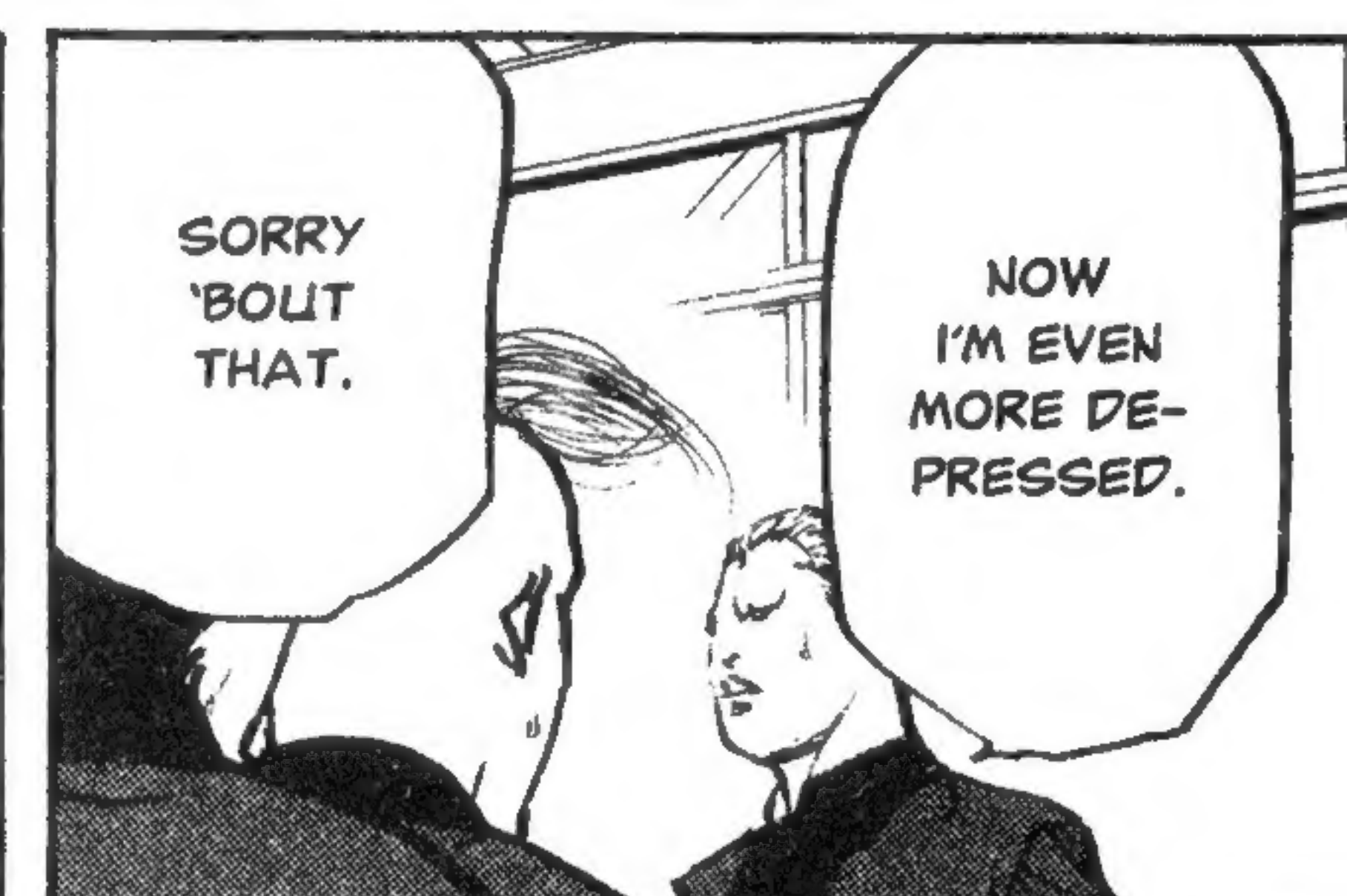
YEAH, IT'S PRETTY BAD.

AARGH! I CAN'T STAND IT!



YEAH, THAT'S A GOOD IDEA!

LET US MAKE IT UP TO YOU. WE SHOULD ALL SHARE AN EMBARRASSING EXPERIENCE WE'VE HAD IN THE PAST.



SORRY 'BOUT THAT.

NOW I'M EVEN MORE DEPRESSED.



HUH. AND?

THE TRUTH IS...NOT LONG AGO, I WENT ON A DOUBLE DATE.



JUST LEAVE IT TO ME!

YOU FIRST.



SO THE FOUR OF US GO INTO THIS COFFEE SHOP...



THE TWO GIRLS KNEW EACH OTHER, BUT ME AND THE OTHER GUY WERE COMPLETE STRANGERS.



GENTLEMEN,
WHAT WE NEED
FROM YOU IS
EMBARRASSING
STORIES.
ANYTHING WILL
BE FINE!



UNDERSTOOD.
NOW LET'S SET
THAT ASIDE FOR
THE MOMENT.

I JUST FELL
DOWN A
MANHOLE AND
THERE WERE
SOME MONKEYS
AT THE BOTTOM.
THAT'S IT.



A
MANHOLE?

AND I FELL
DOWN A
MANHOLE.



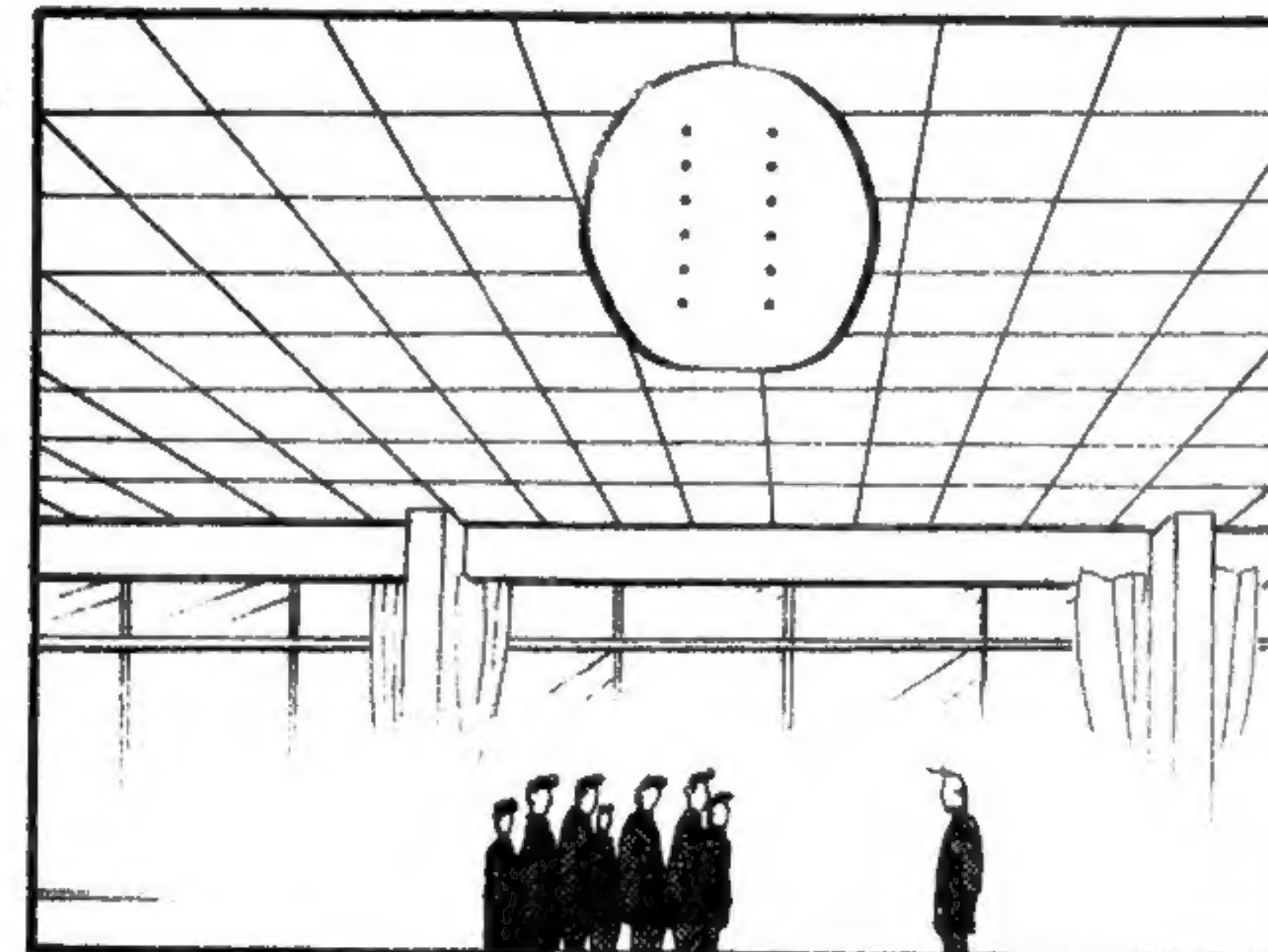
THE OTHER
DAY, I WAS
OUT WALKING
AROUND...



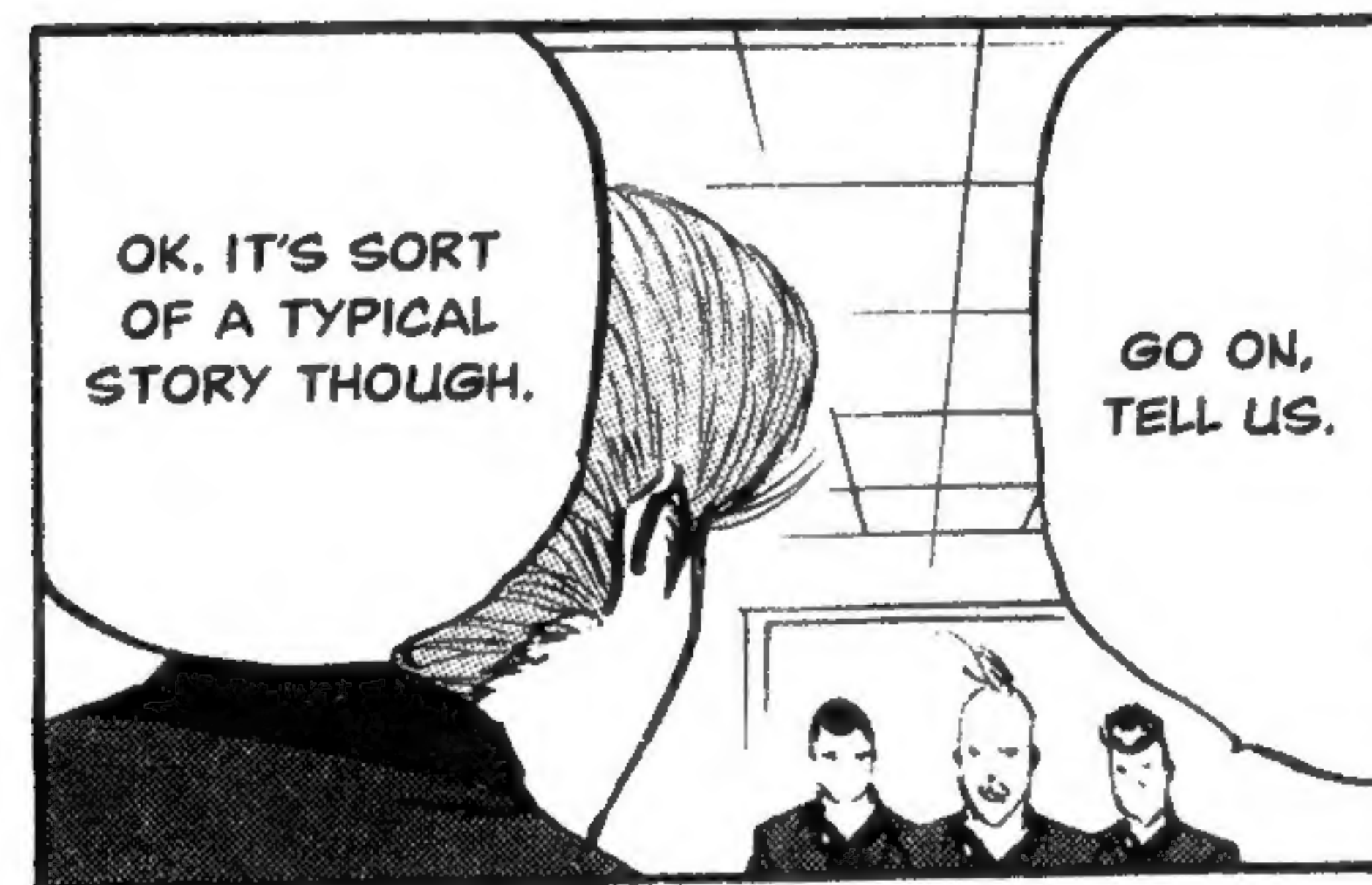
IT'S
GONNA BE
A DIFFICULT
ONE TO TOP.

YEAH, BUT
THAT PORNO
MAG INCIDENT
PACKS A
PRETTY MEAN
PUNCH, YOU
KNOW.

MAEDA HAS
ALREADY SHARED
HIS STORY, AND IS
NOW ALONE IN HIS
EMBARRASSMENT!
AT THIS RATE,
THERE'LL BE NO
HELPING HIM!



AND DOWN AT
THE BOTTOM,
THERE WAS THIS
UNDERGROUND
MONKEY KINGDOM.

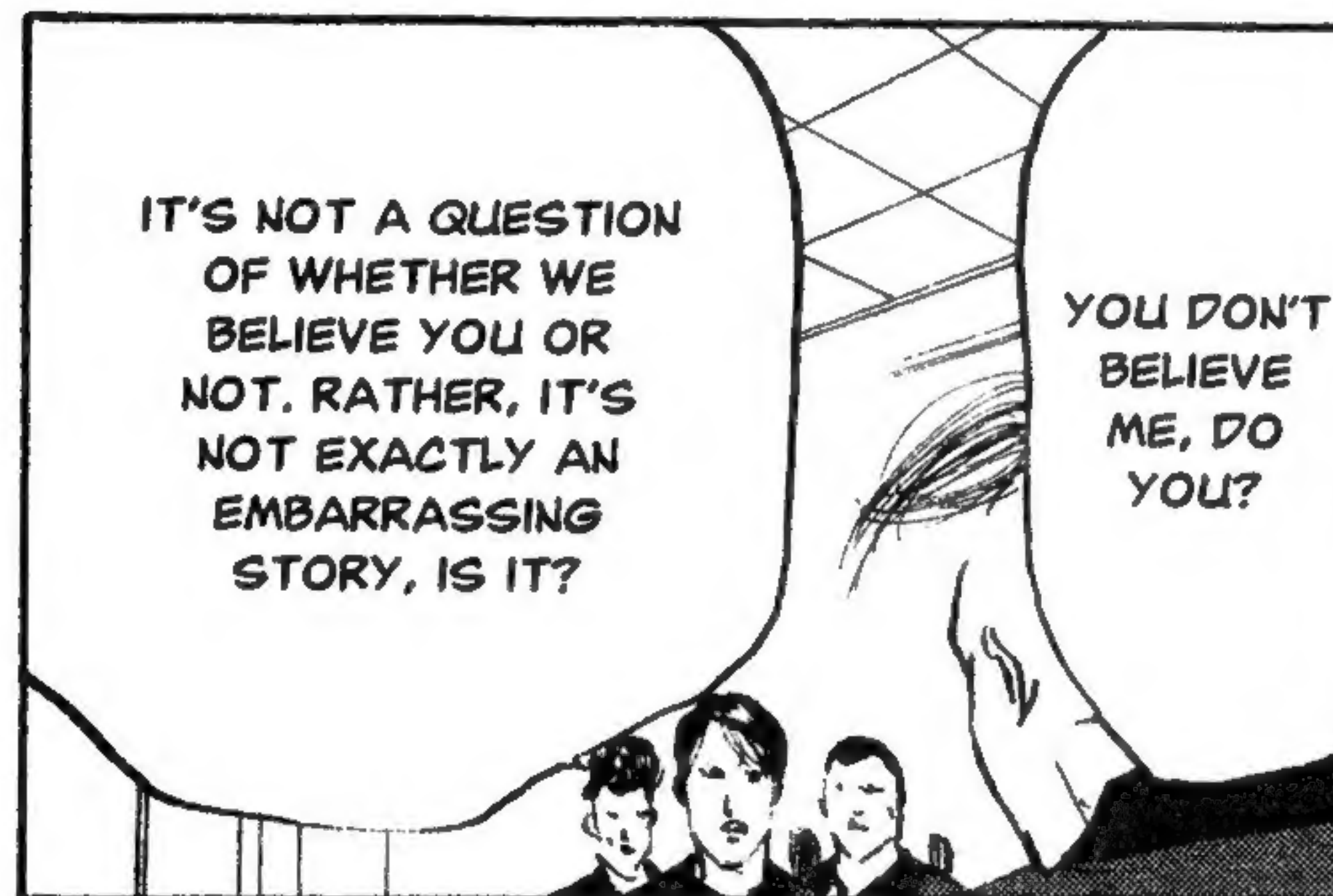


OK. IT'S SORT
OF A TYPICAL
STORY THOUGH.

GO ON,
TELL US.



AH! Y'KNOW,
I'VE GOT AN
EMBARRASSING
STORY ABOUT
SOMETHING THAT
HAPPENED TO ME
AT THE VIDEO
STORE.



IT'S NOT A QUESTION
OF WHETHER WE
BELIEVE YOU OR
NOT. RATHER, IT'S
NOT EXACTLY AN
EMBARRASSING
STORY, IS IT?

YOU DON'T
BELIEVE
ME, DO
YOU?



YEAH.

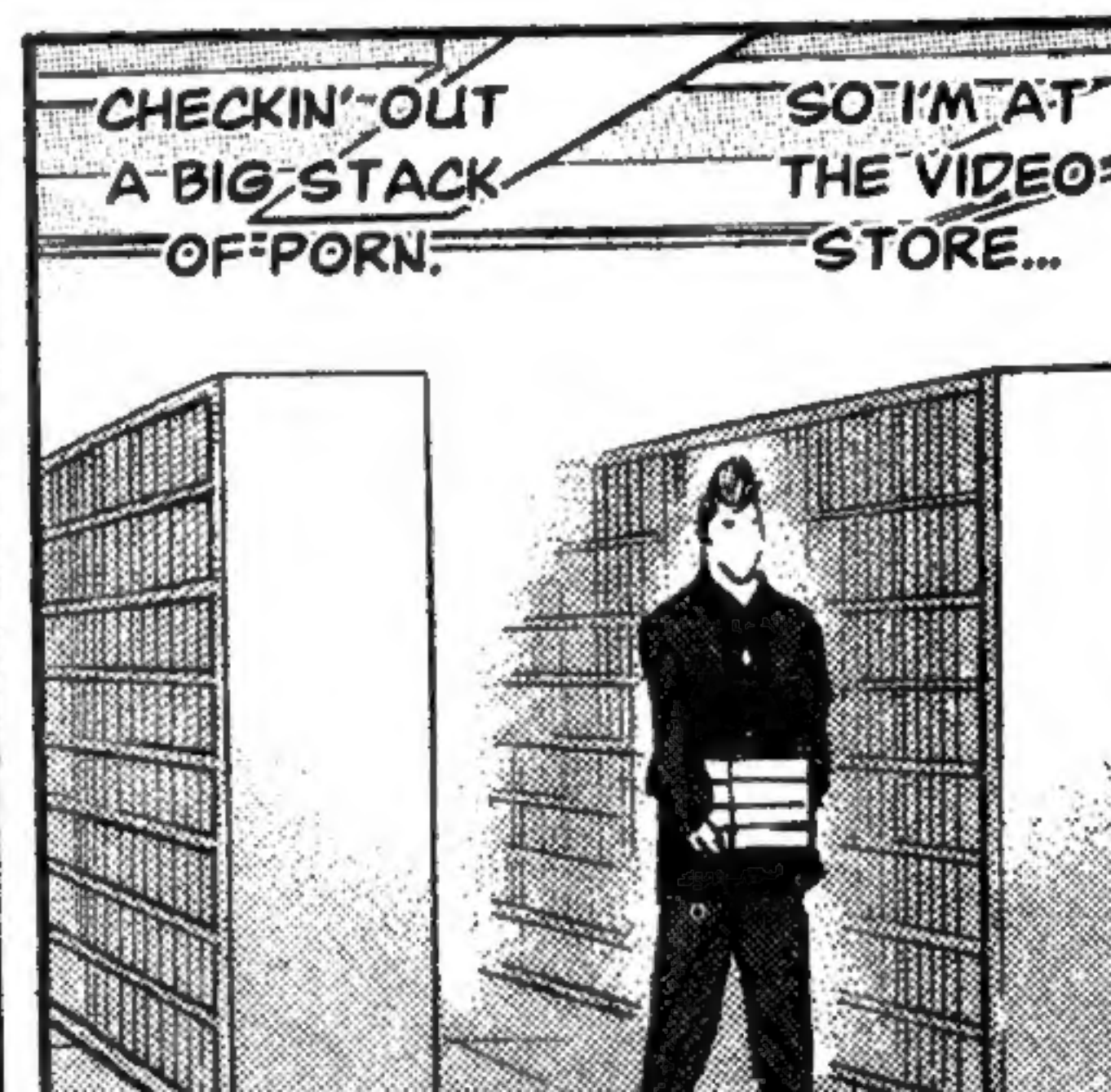
THAT'S
IT?



YEAH, THAT
WAS REALLY
EMBARRASSING.

WELCOME.

I TAKE IT
UP TO THE
COUNTER, AND
THERE'S THIS
CUTE CHICK AT
THE REGISTER.



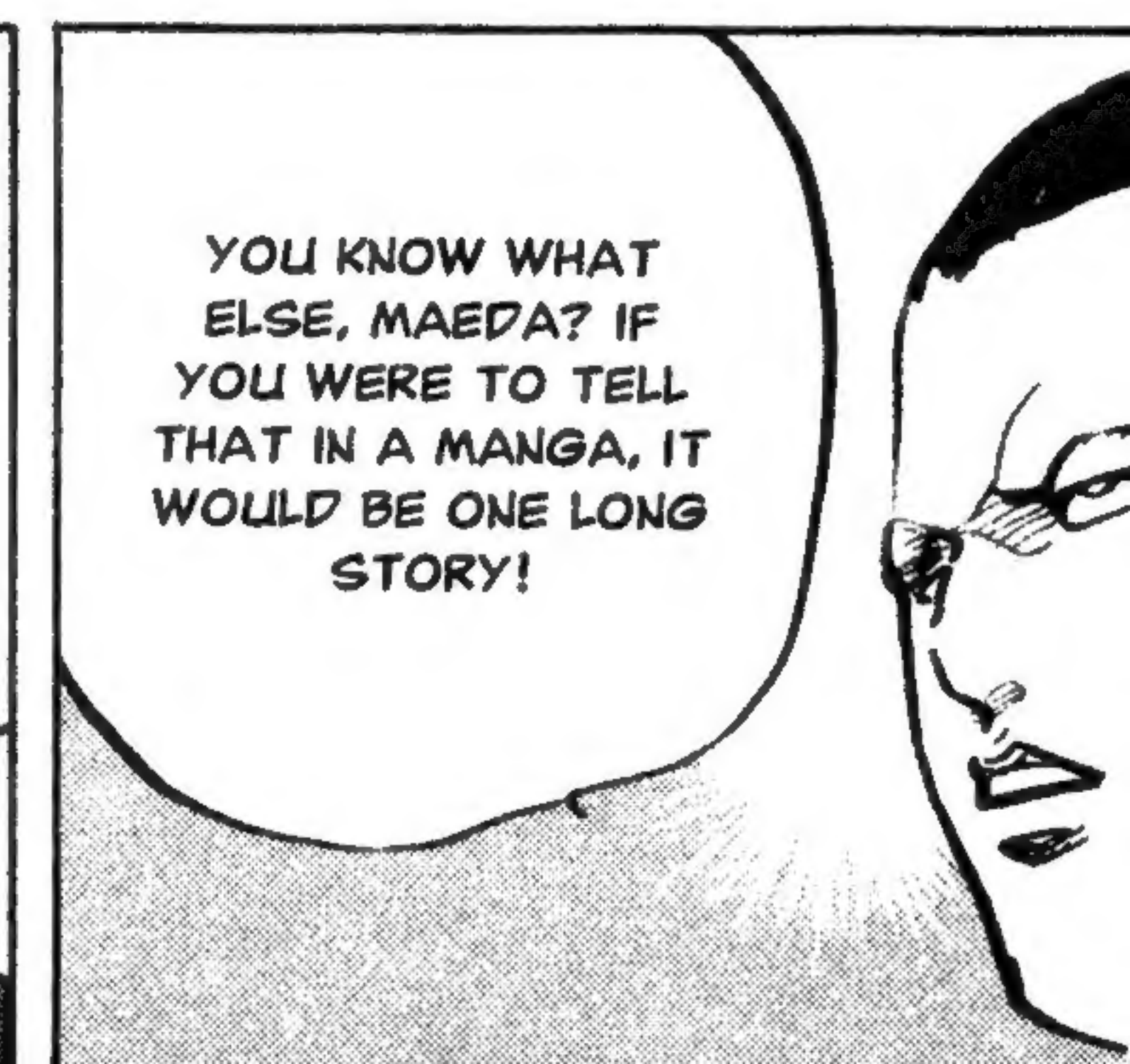
CHECKIN' OUT
A BIG STACK
OF PORN.

SO I'M AT
THE VIDEO
STORE...

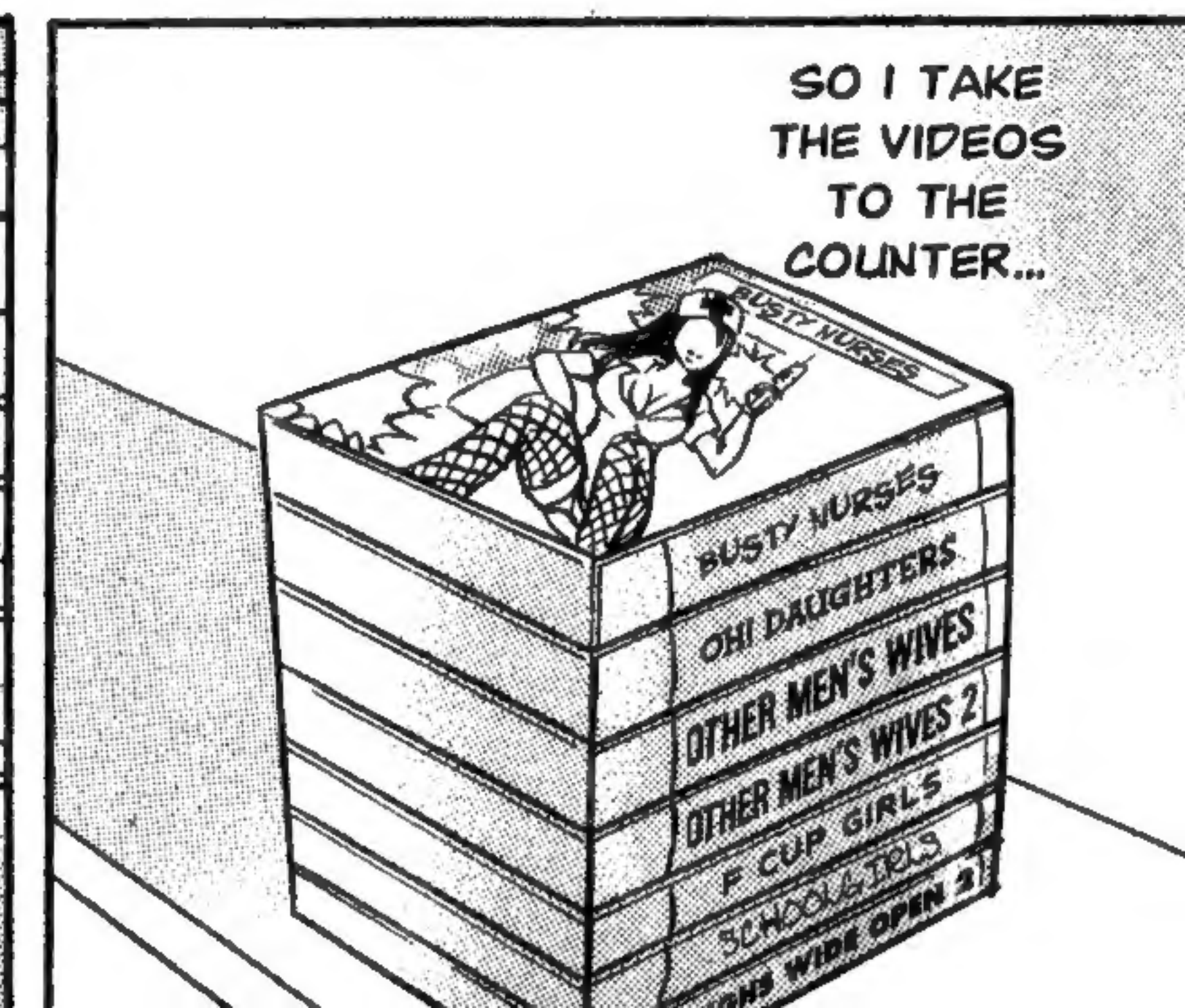
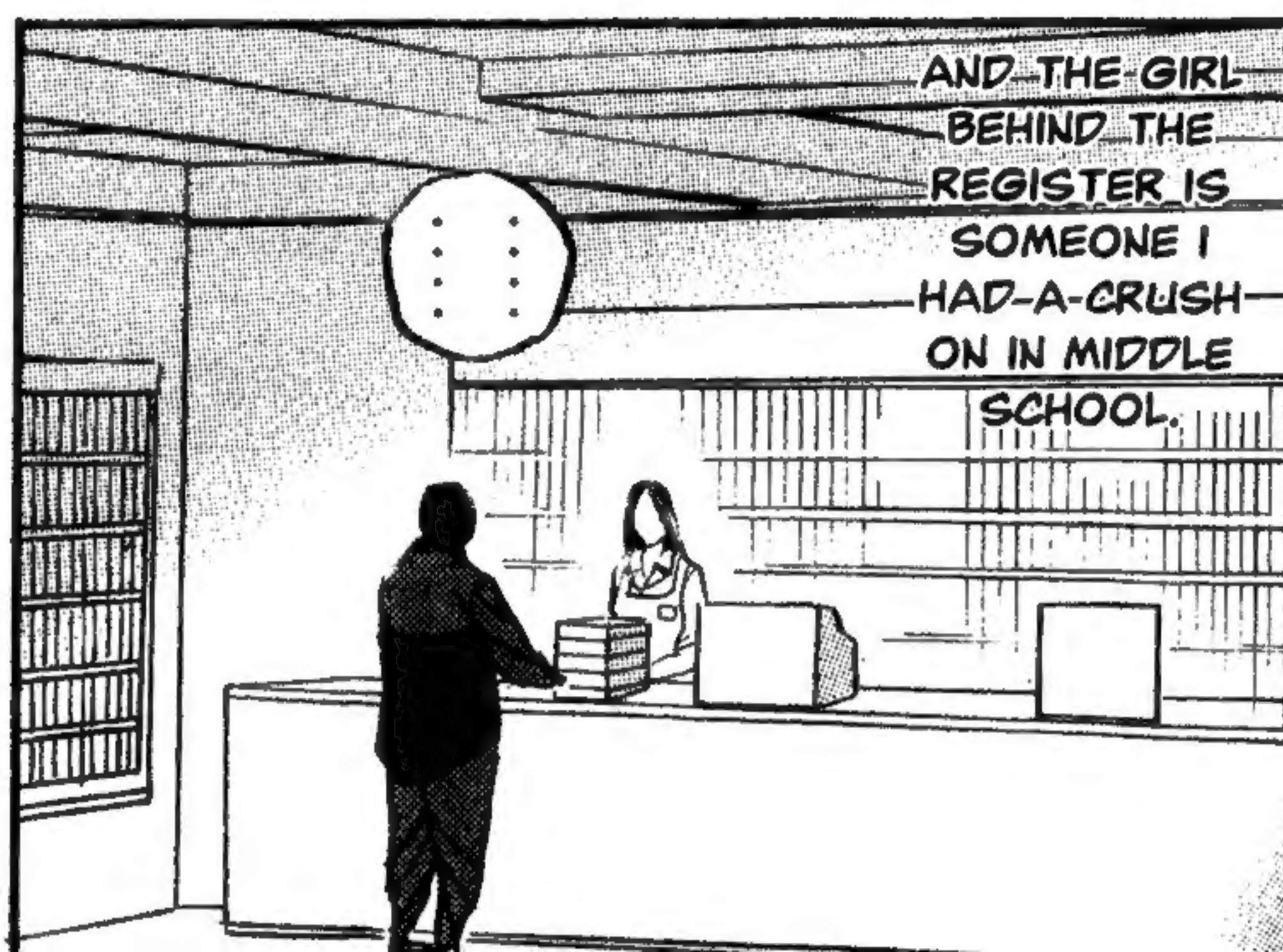
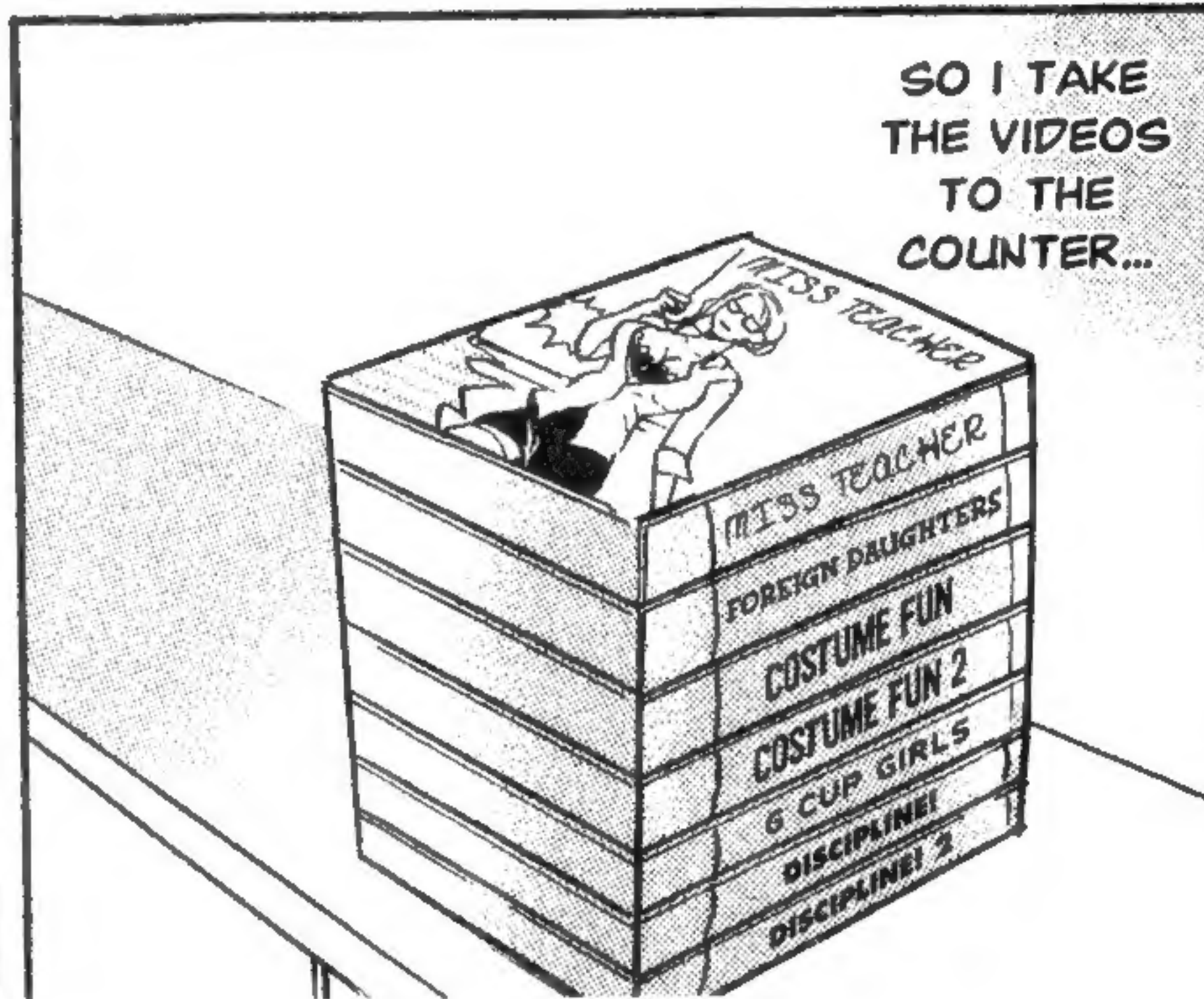
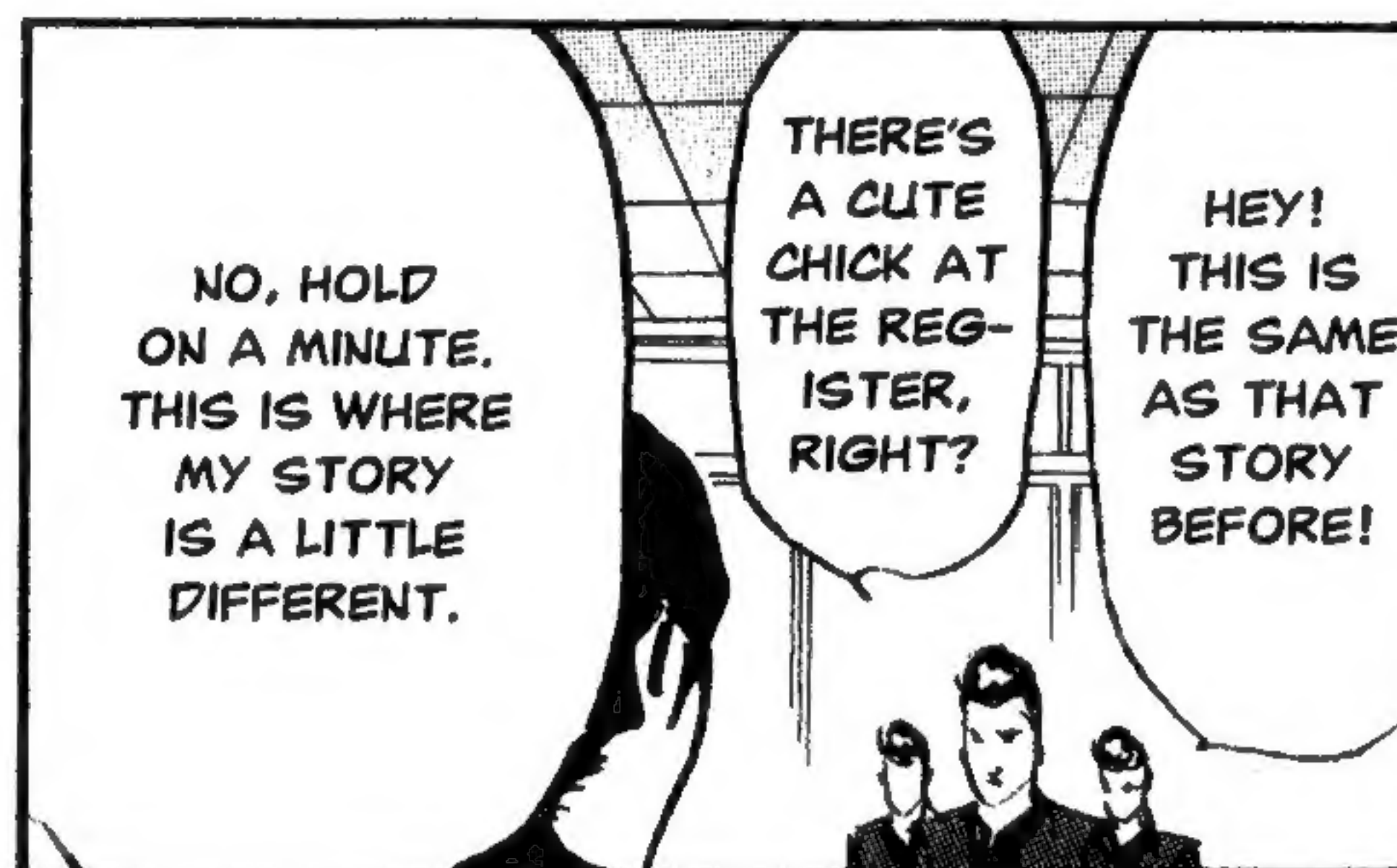
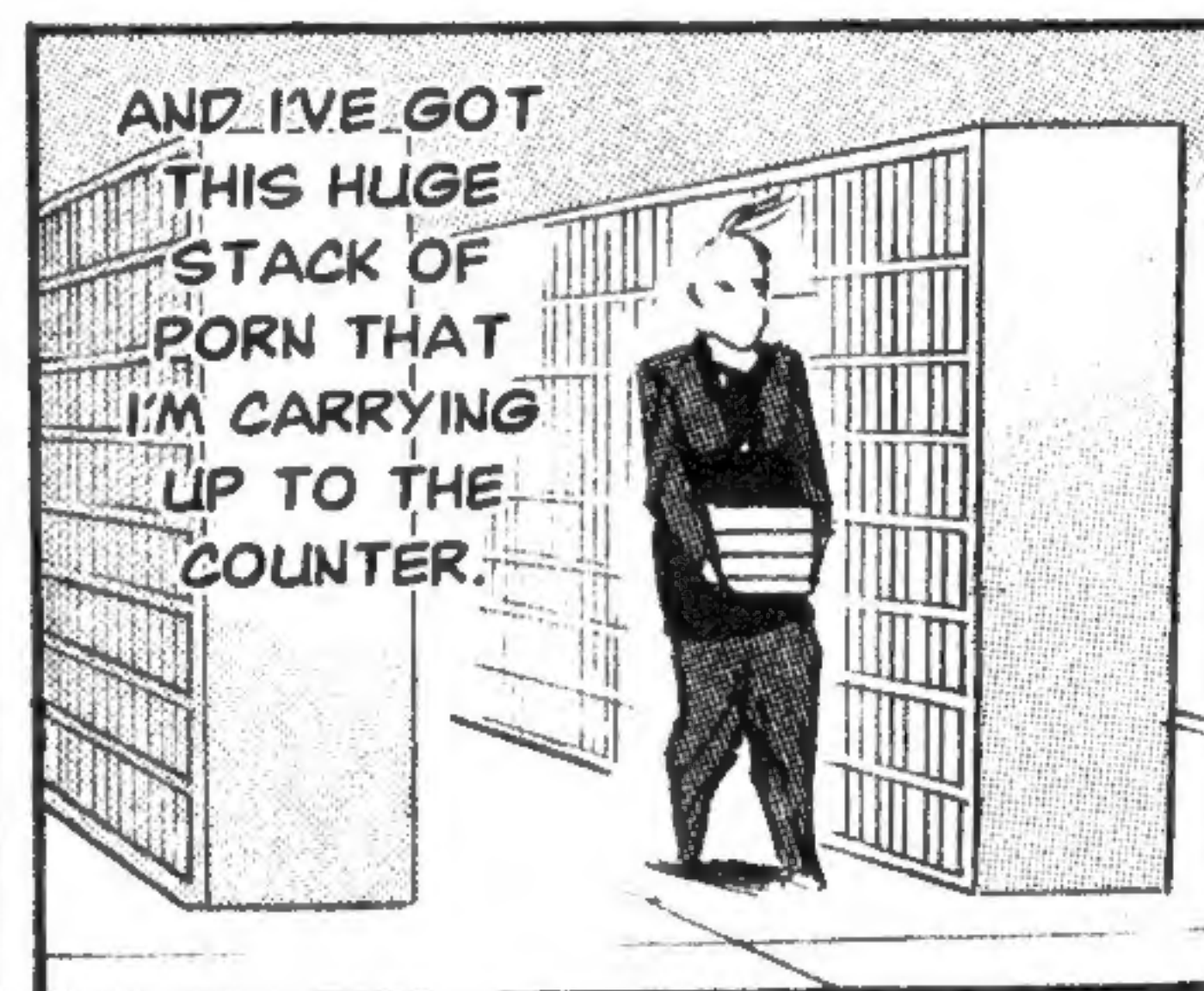
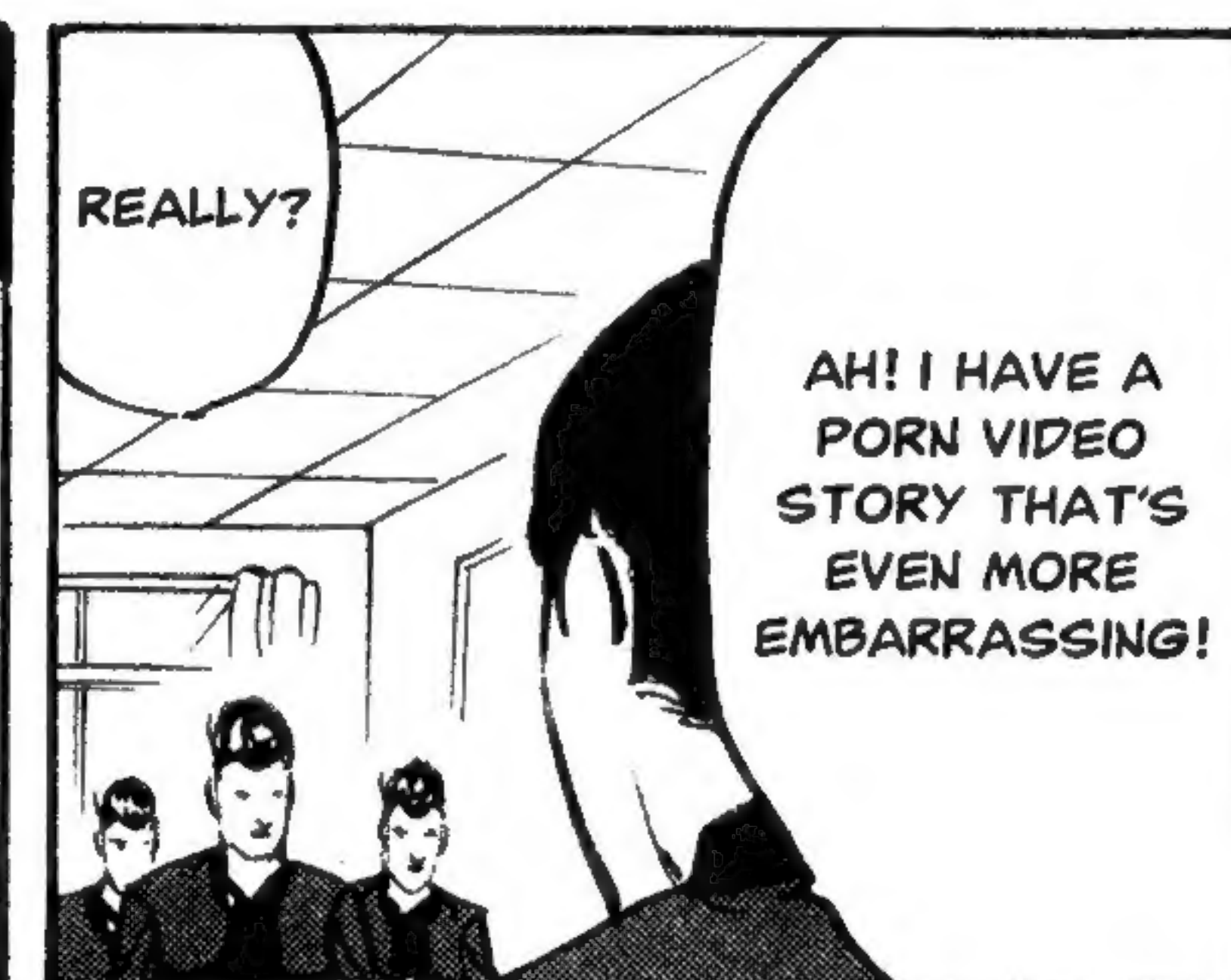
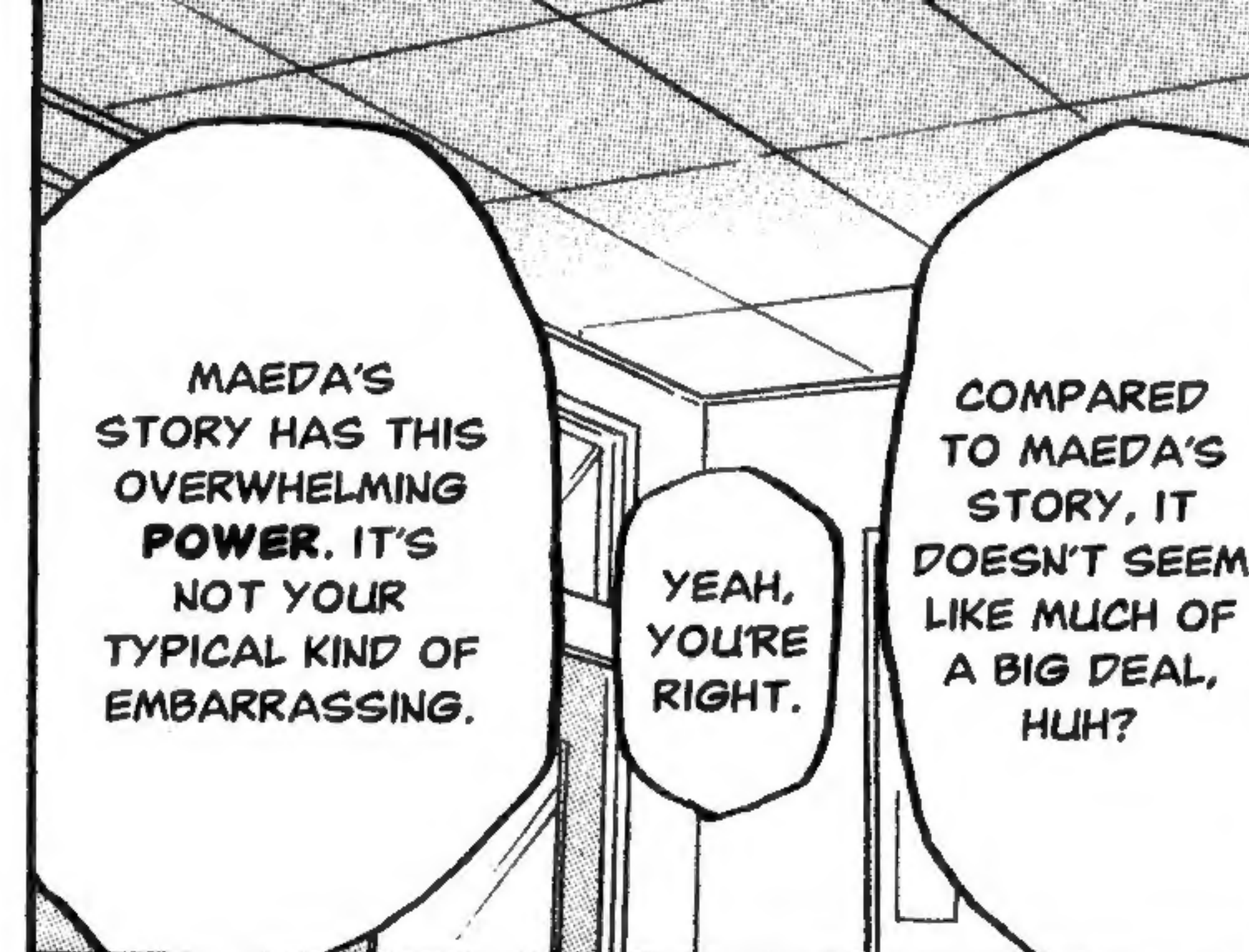
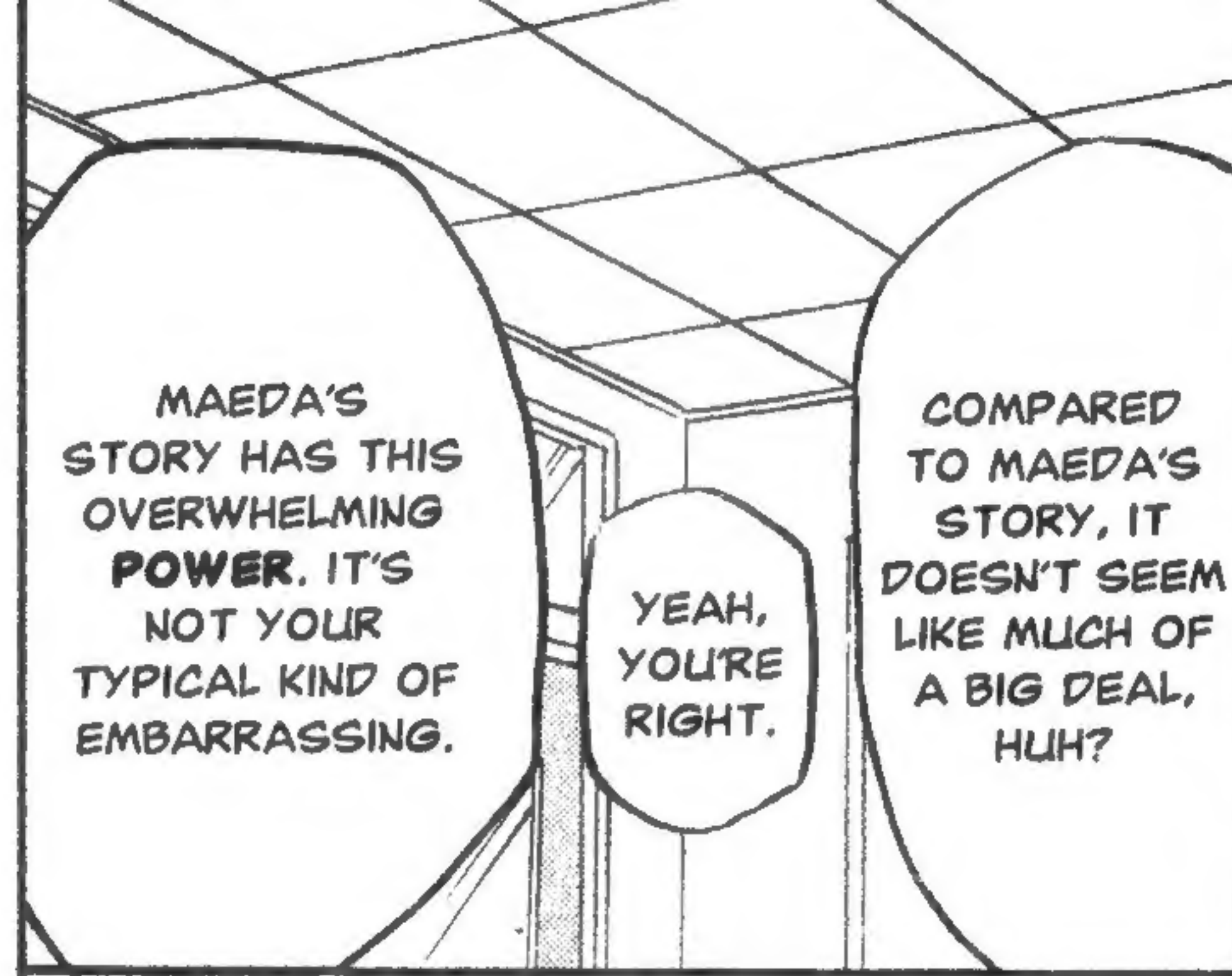


NAH.
THERE'S
NOTHING
MORE TO
TELL.

ISN'T THERE A
WAY YOU CAN
WRAP IT UP IN
JUST A FEW
WORDS?



YOU KNOW WHAT
ELSE, MAEDA? IF
YOU WERE TO TELL
THAT IN A MANGA, IT
WOULD BE ONE LONG
STORY!





COMPARATIVELY
SPEAKING, THAT
THING WITH THE
PORN MAGS IS
NOTHIN'!

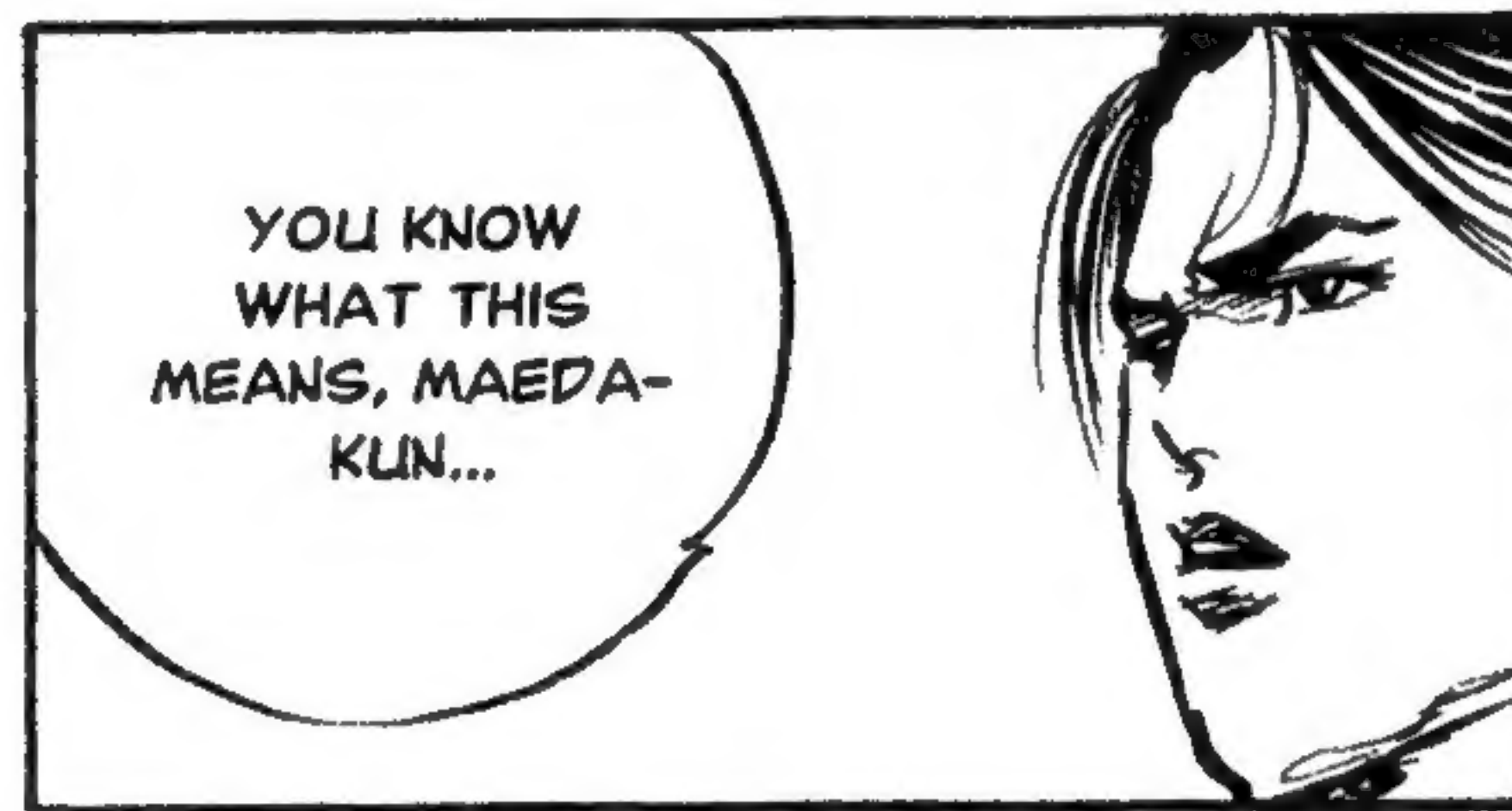
YEAH, IT
TOTALLY
BLOWS AWAY
MAEDA'S
STORY.



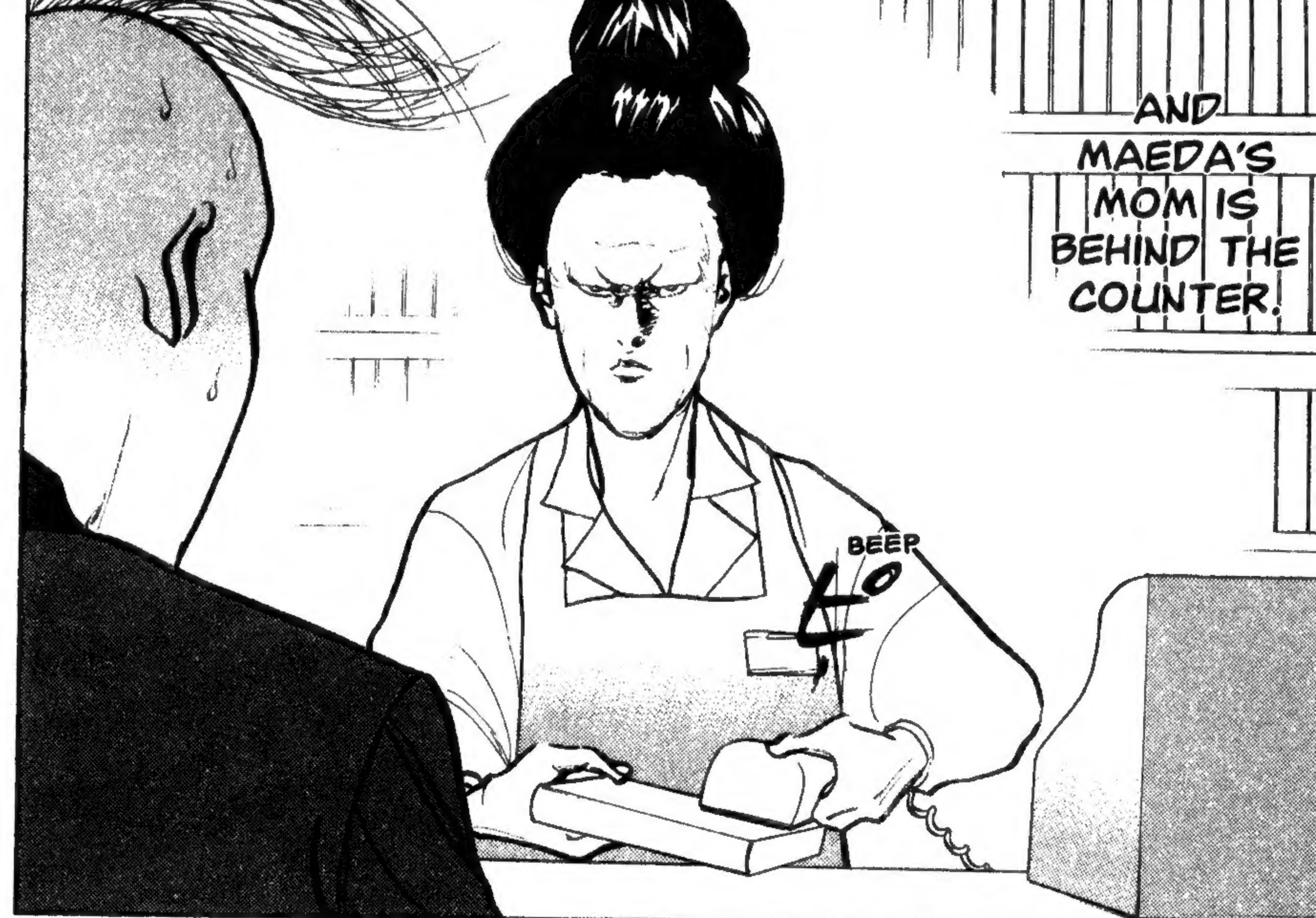
OUT OF ALL THE
STORIES WE'VE
HEARD TODAY,
HAYASHIDA'S
HAS GOTTA
BE THE MOST
EMBARRASSING.



HUH?



YOU KNOW
WHAT THIS
MEANS, MAEDA-
KUN...



AND
MAEDA'S
MOM IS
BEHIND THE
COUNTER.



THAT'S RIGHT!
YOURS AIN'T
NOWHERE IN THE
SAME LEAGUE AS
HAYASHIDA'S!

IT WAS
REALLY
EMBAR-
RASSING!

AH.

IT MEANS
SOMEONE HAS
HAD A MORE
EMBARRASSING
EXPERIENCE
THAN YOU.



I TOTALLY
COULDN'T
TAKE IT! I'M
GETTING
SCARED
JUST
IMAGINING
IT!

RIGHT?

I'D BE SO
EMBARRASSED
I'D WANNA
DIE!

AAAGH!
NO WAY!



UM, OK.
THANKS
GUYS.

NOW YOU
CAN GO OUT
AND WALK
WITH YOUR
HEAD HELD
HIGH!



YEAH, SO DON'T GO
THINKING YOU'RE THE
ONLY ONE WHO'S
BEEN EMBARRASSED.
WE'VE ALL
HAD SIMILAR
EXPERIENCES.



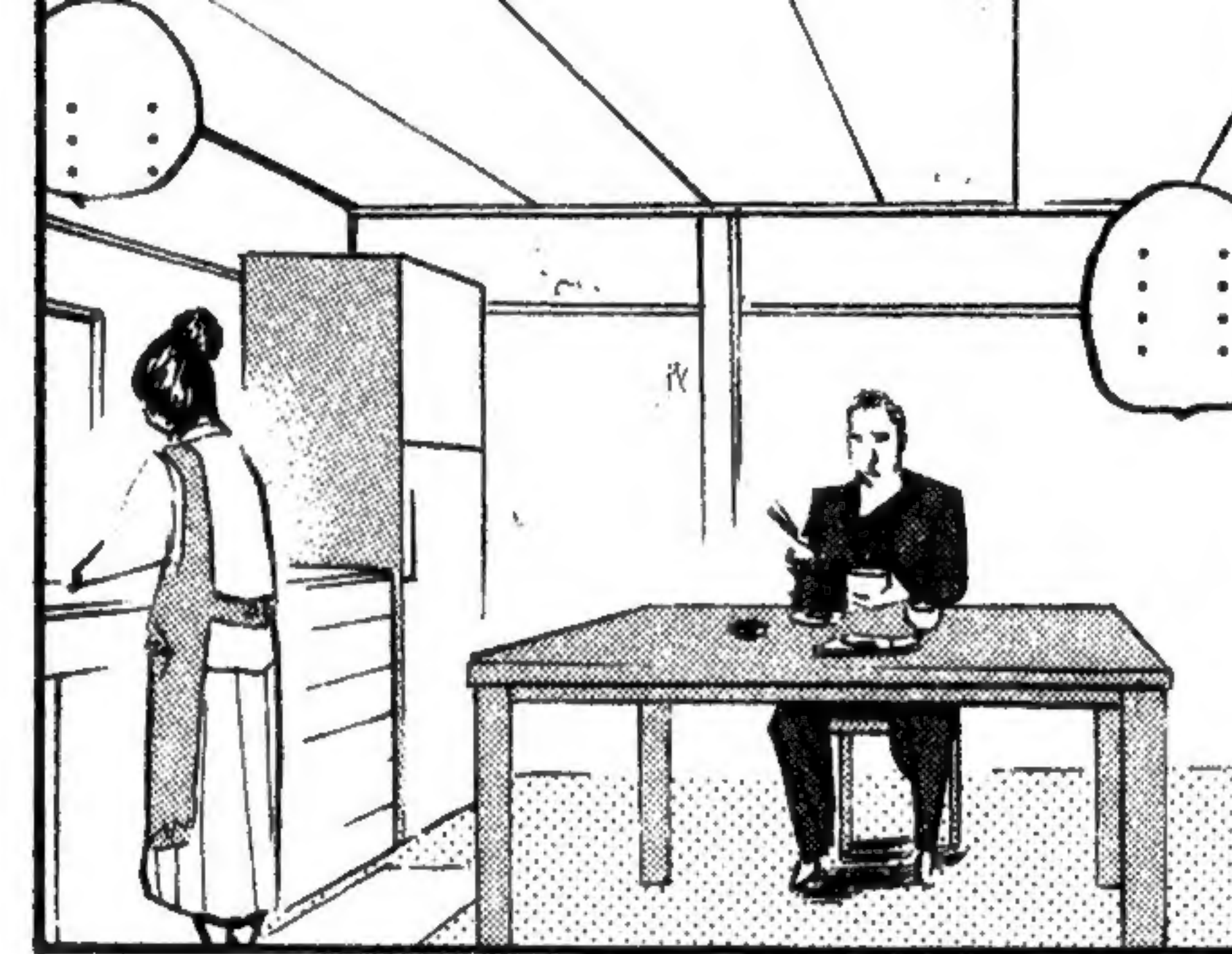
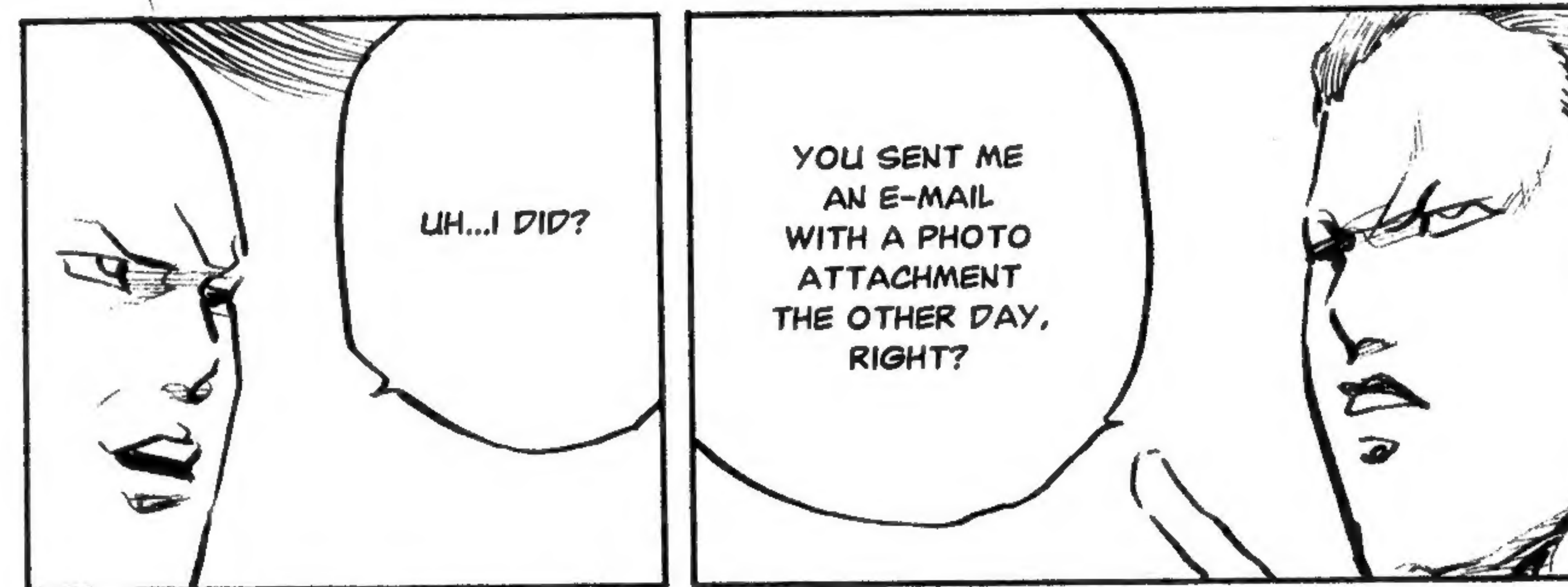
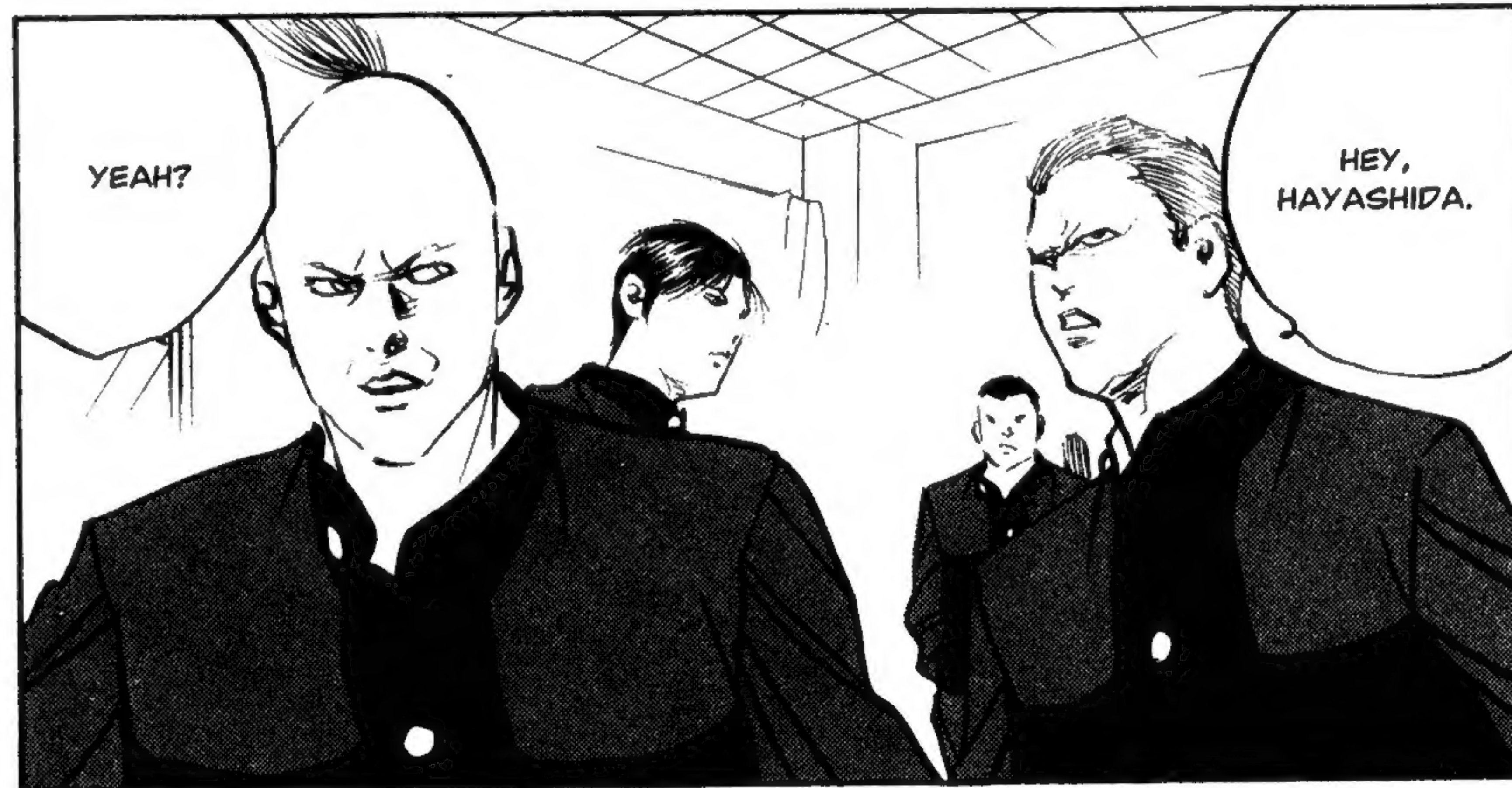
THAT'S
NOT FRICKIN'
TYPICAL
AT ALL!

IT'S A
REALLY
TYPICAL
STORY.
SORRY.

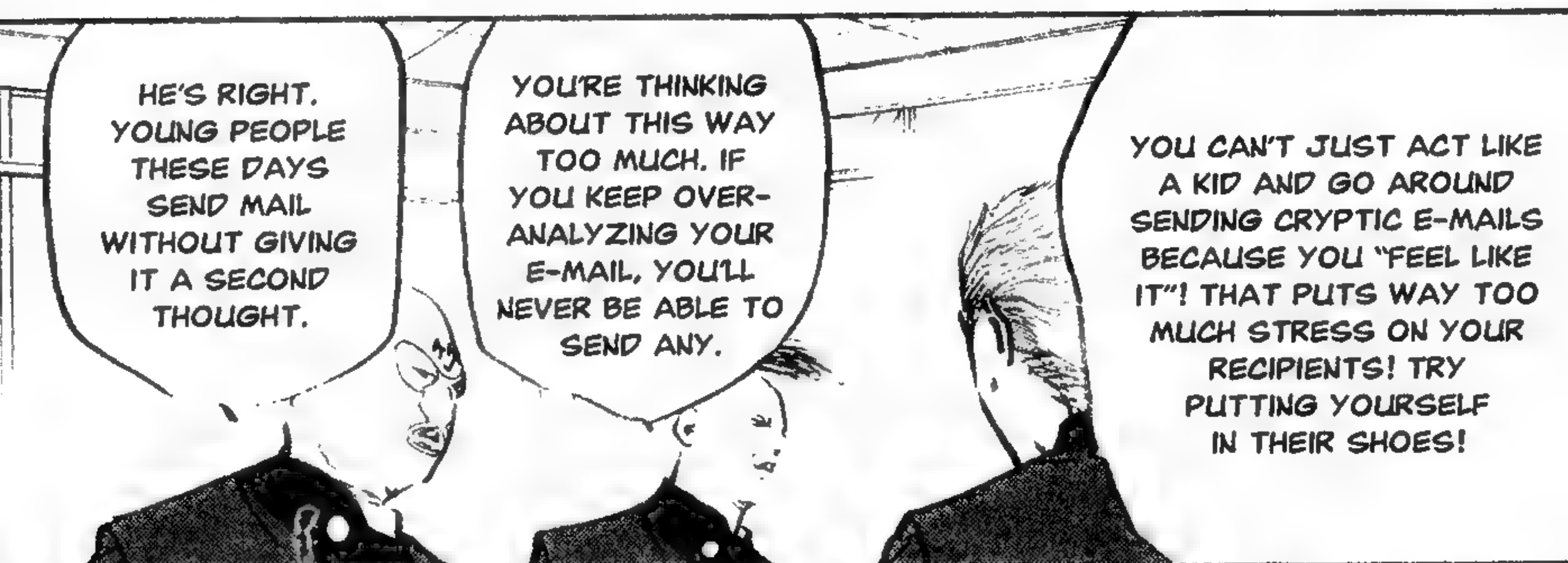
STILL...

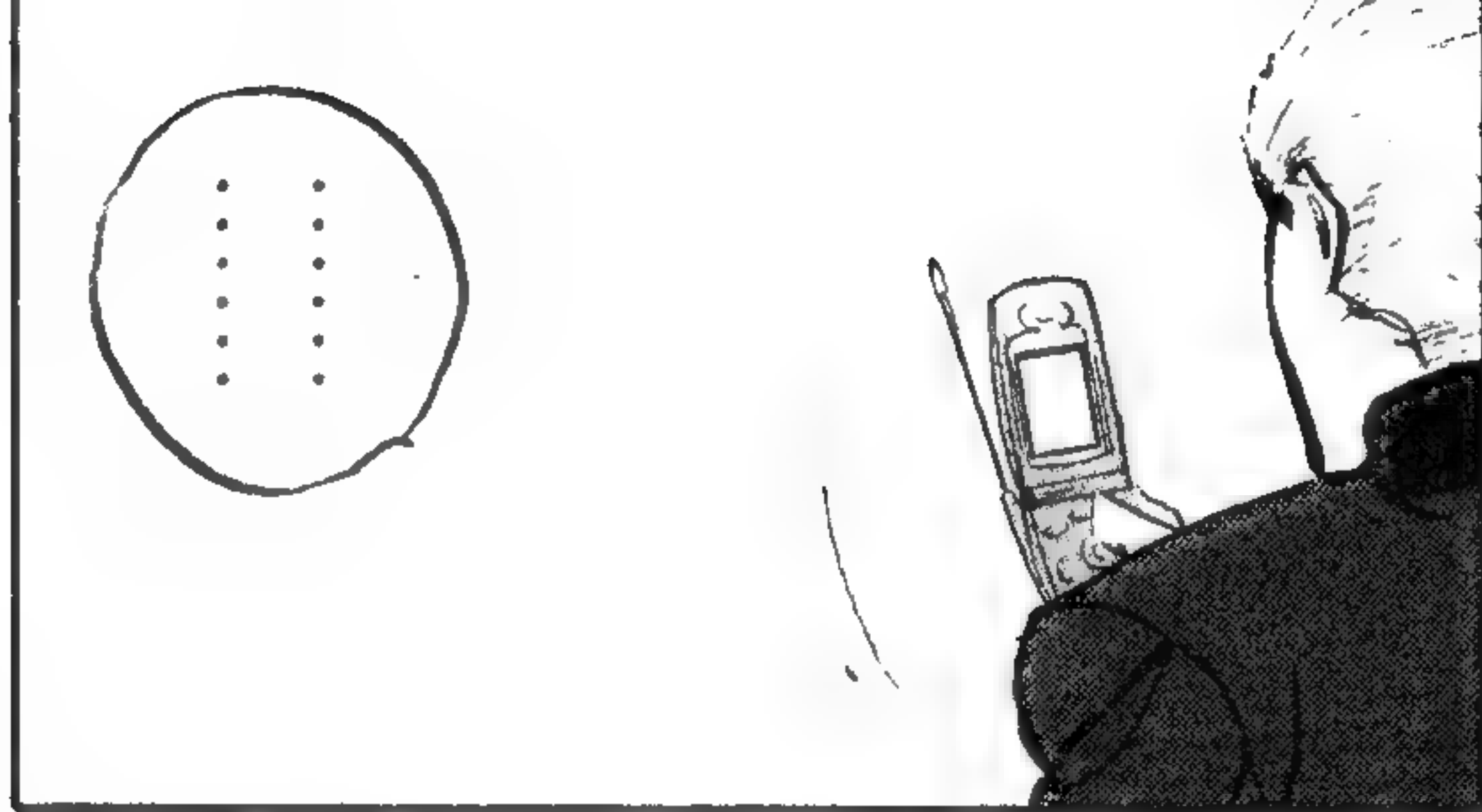


CHAPTER 240: **TELEPHONE**



I AGREE.

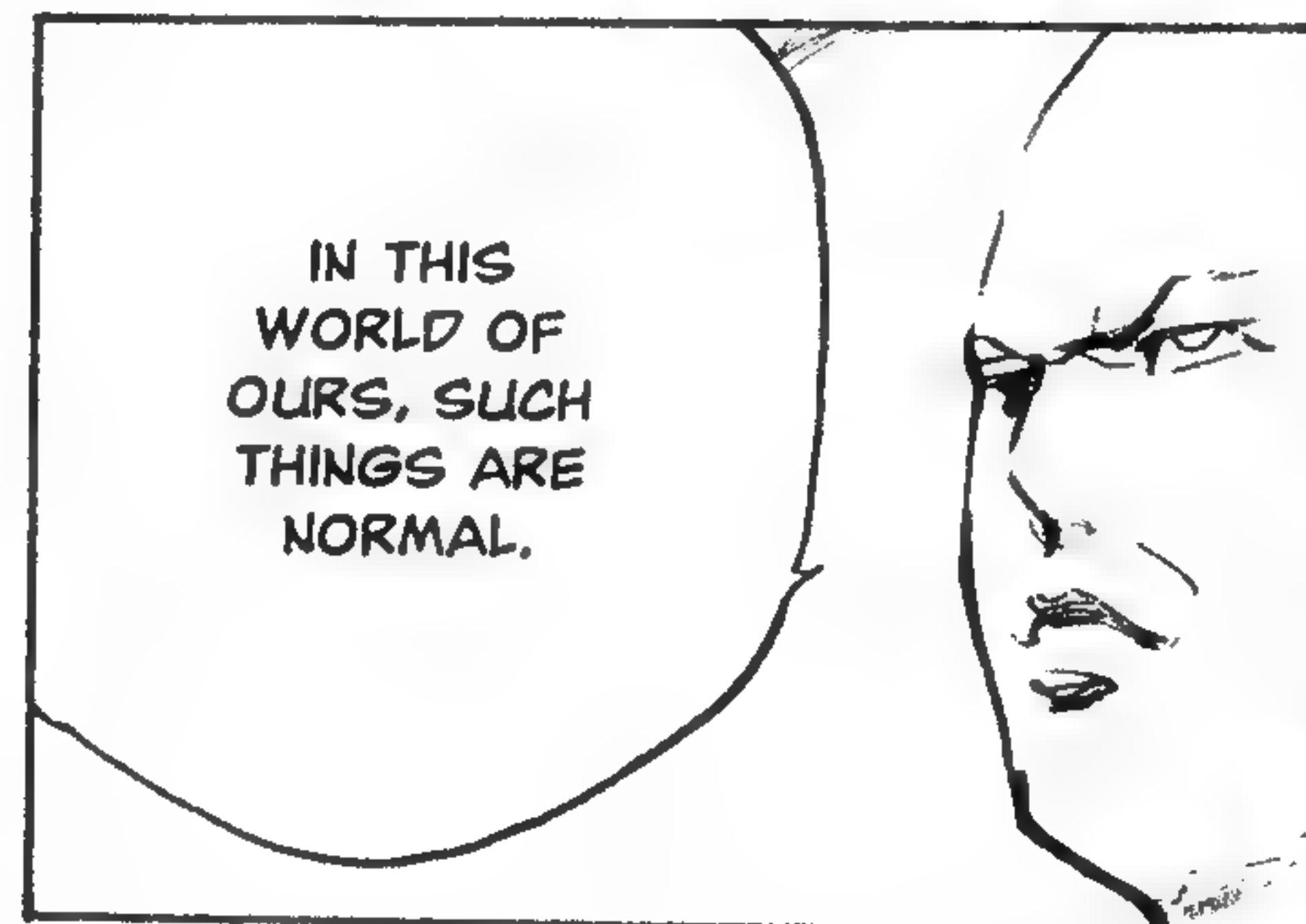
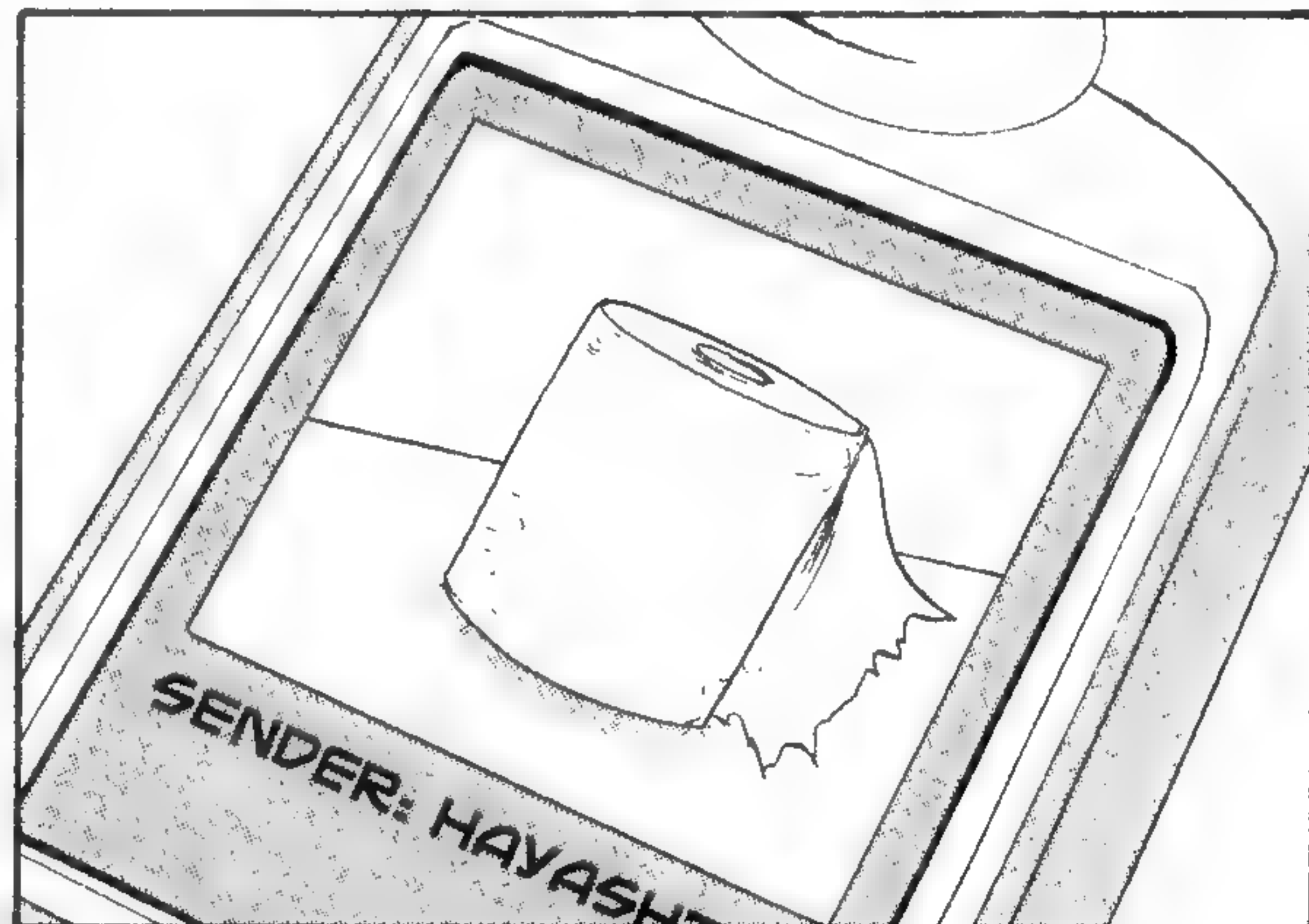




N-NO! IT'S NOT LIKE THAT AT ALL. HE JUST WANTED TO SEND IT.

YOUR FRIEND WANTED TO BRAG ABOUT THE DELICIOUSNESS OF THIS MUFFIN TO OTHERS, IS THAT IT?

HE SENT A PICTURE OF IT JUST BECAUSE IT LOOKED DELICIOUS... THAT'S FRICKIN' AWESOME!

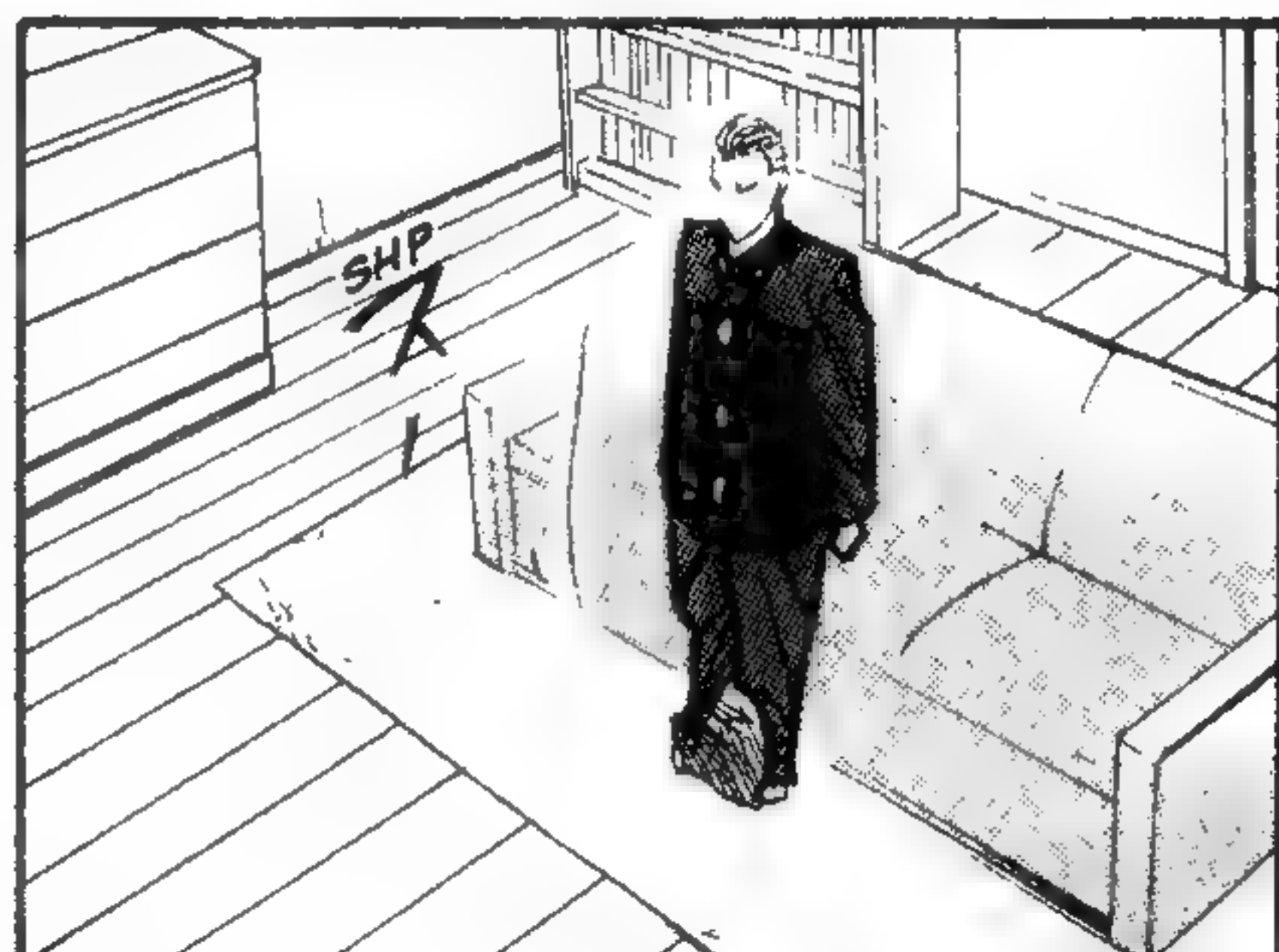


IN THIS WORLD OF OURS, SUCH THINGS ARE NORMAL.



HUH?!

I THINK THAT CLEARS THINGS UP. DON'T YOU, MAEDA?



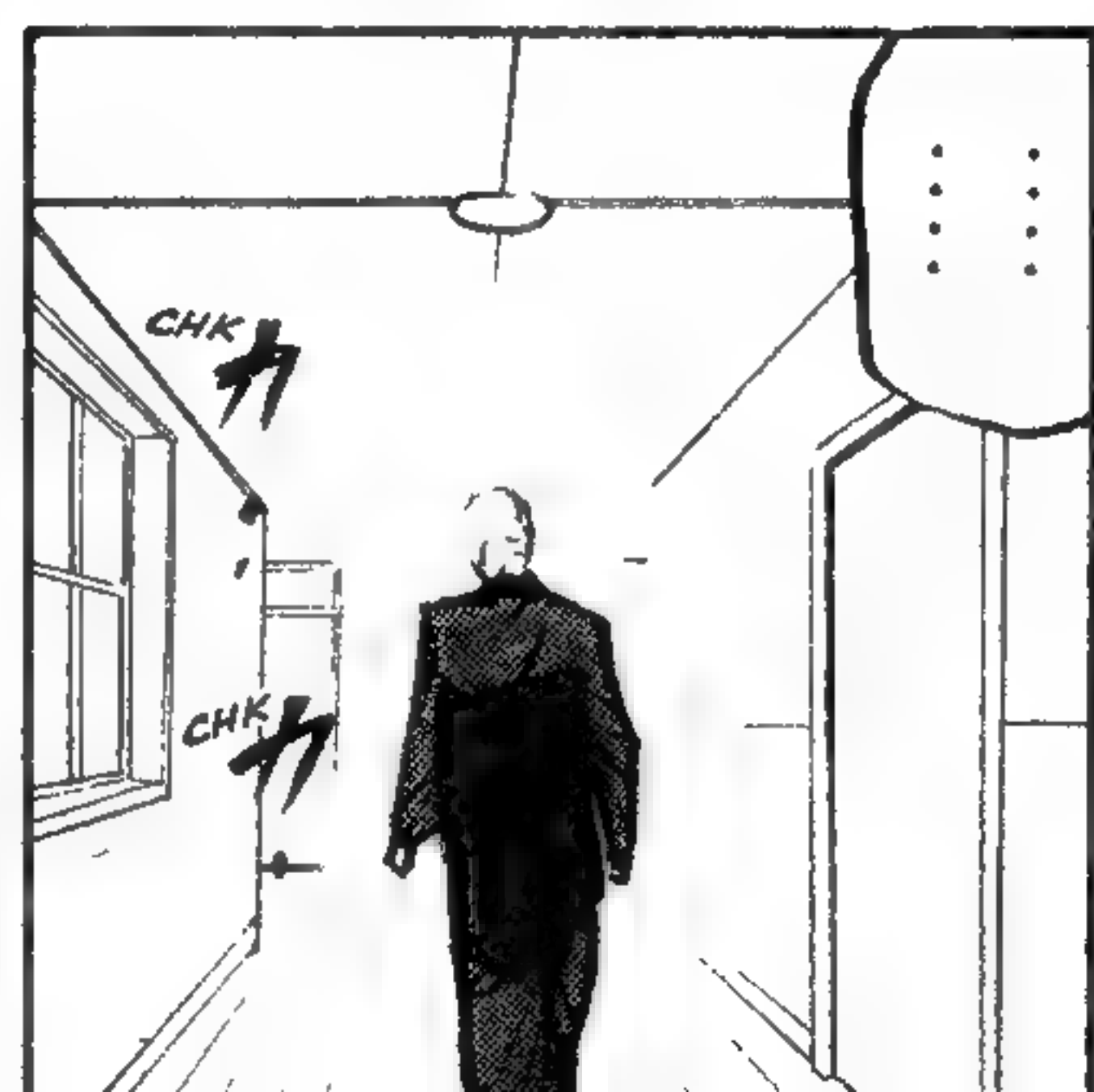
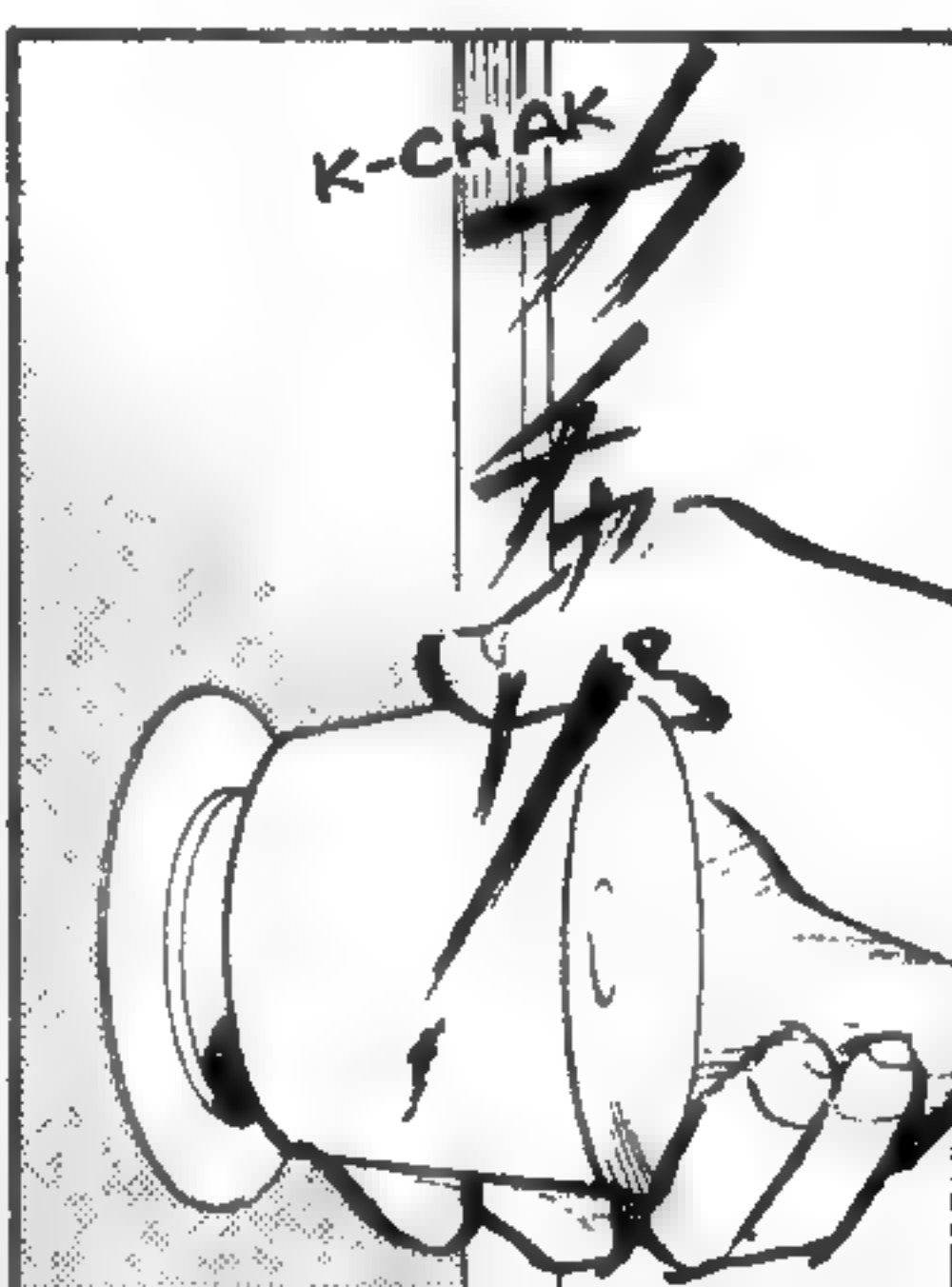
UH, SURE.

I'M GONNA KEEP ON SENDING YOU E-MAILS OUT OF THE BLUE. YOU JUST TRY TO GET USED TO THEM, OK?



THERE'S NO NEED TO GO PUSHING YOURSELF TO CONFORM TO THE CURRENT TRENDS... BUT YOU SHOULD KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN AND AT LEAST TRY TO ADAPT.

OH...

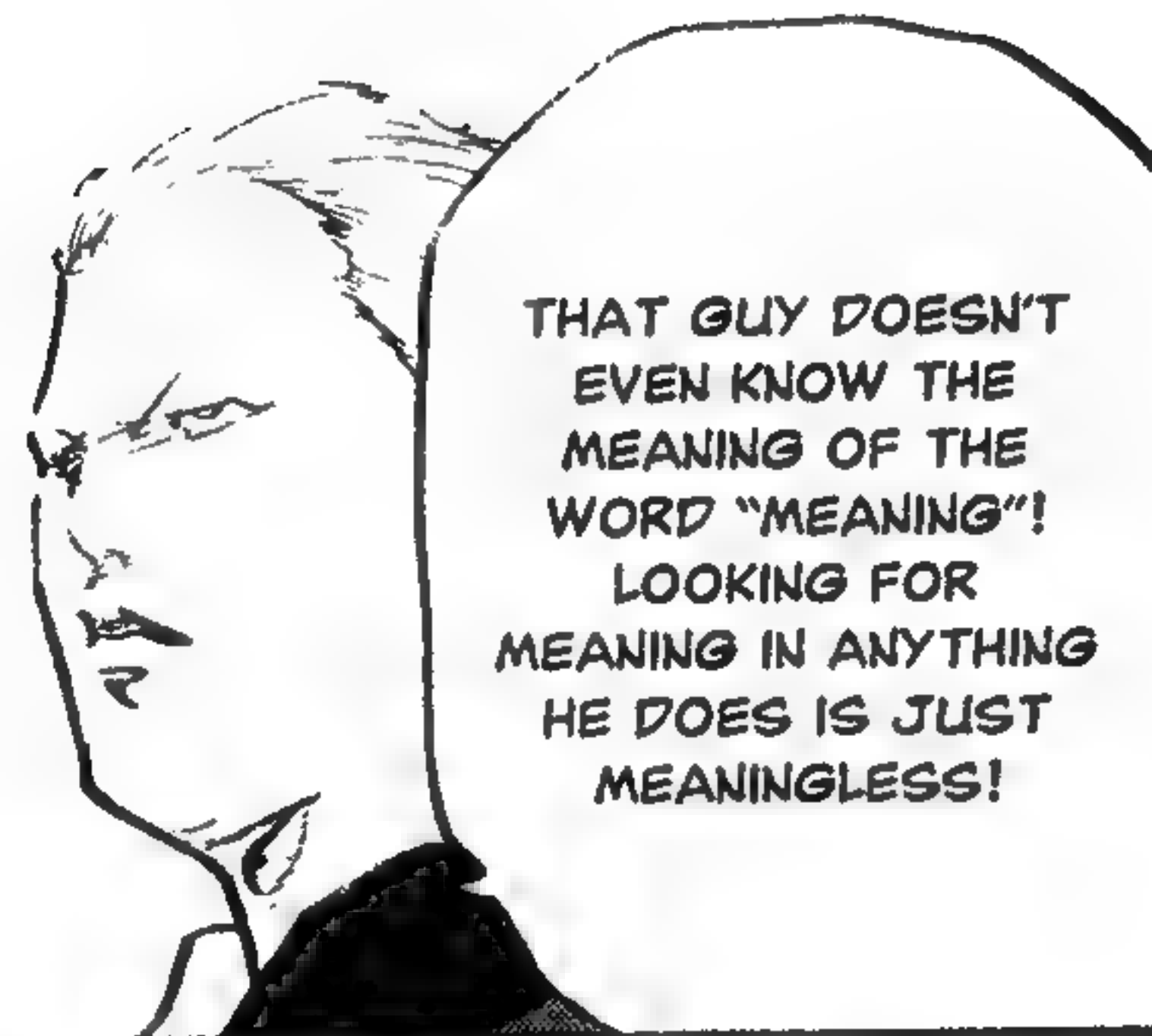




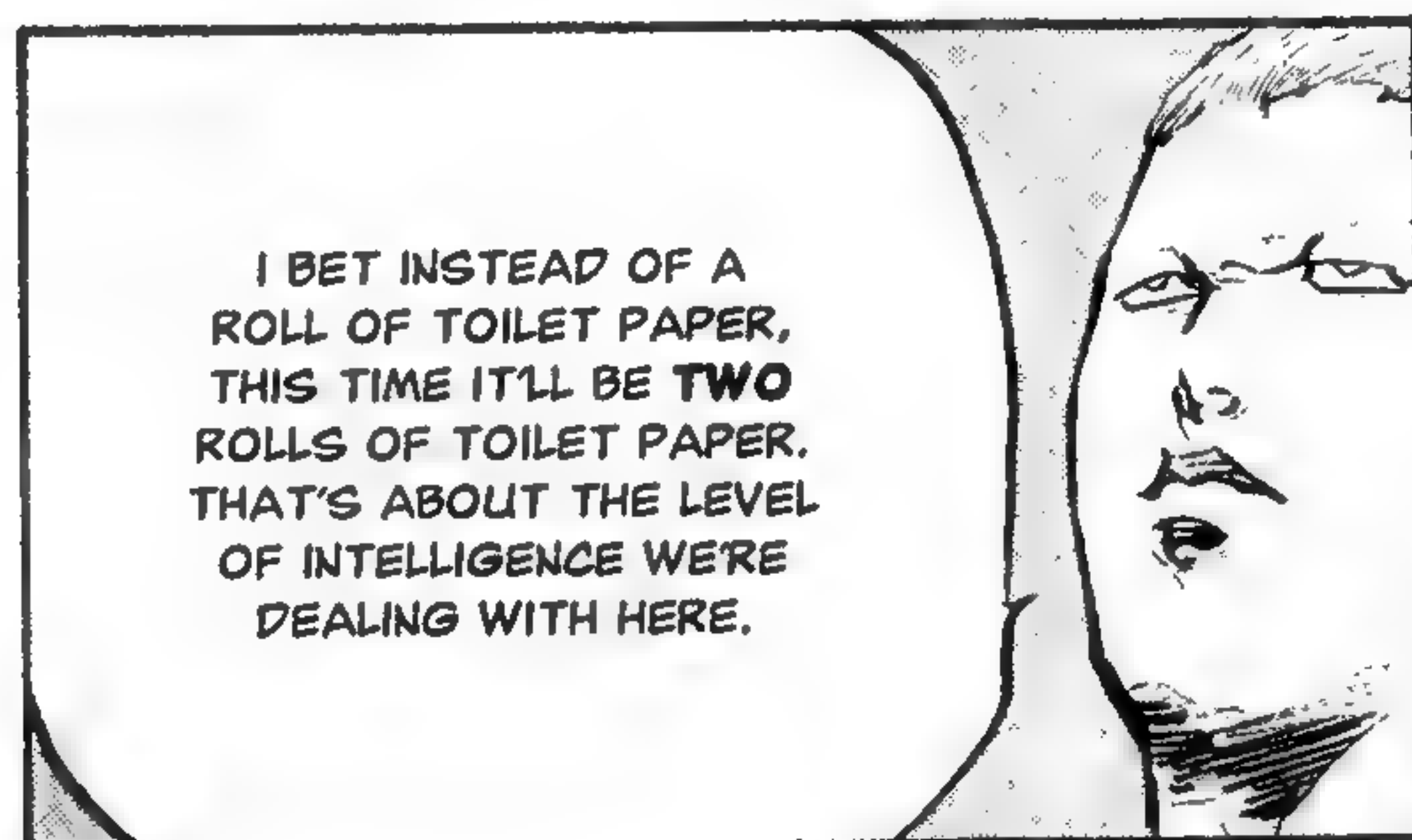
AGAIN?

LO
BEEP

STILL, I CAN'T
LET MYSELF GET
ALL WORKED UP
OVER SOMETHING
LIKE THIS. C'MON,
MAEDA. JUST
IGNORE HIM.



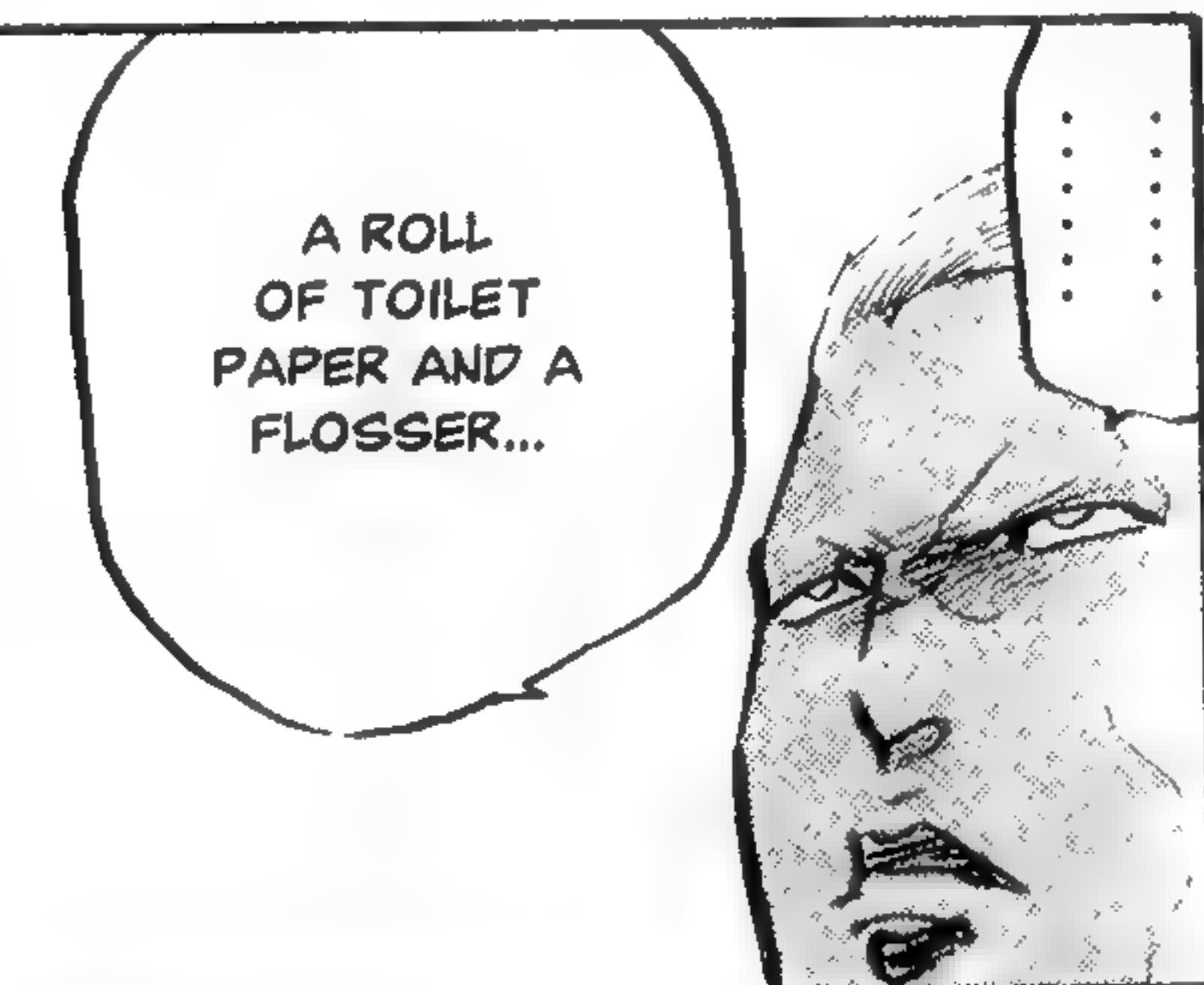
THAT GUY DOESN'T
EVEN KNOW THE
MEANING OF THE
WORD "MEANING"!
LOOKING FOR
MEANING IN ANYTHING
HE DOES IS JUST
MEANINGLESS!



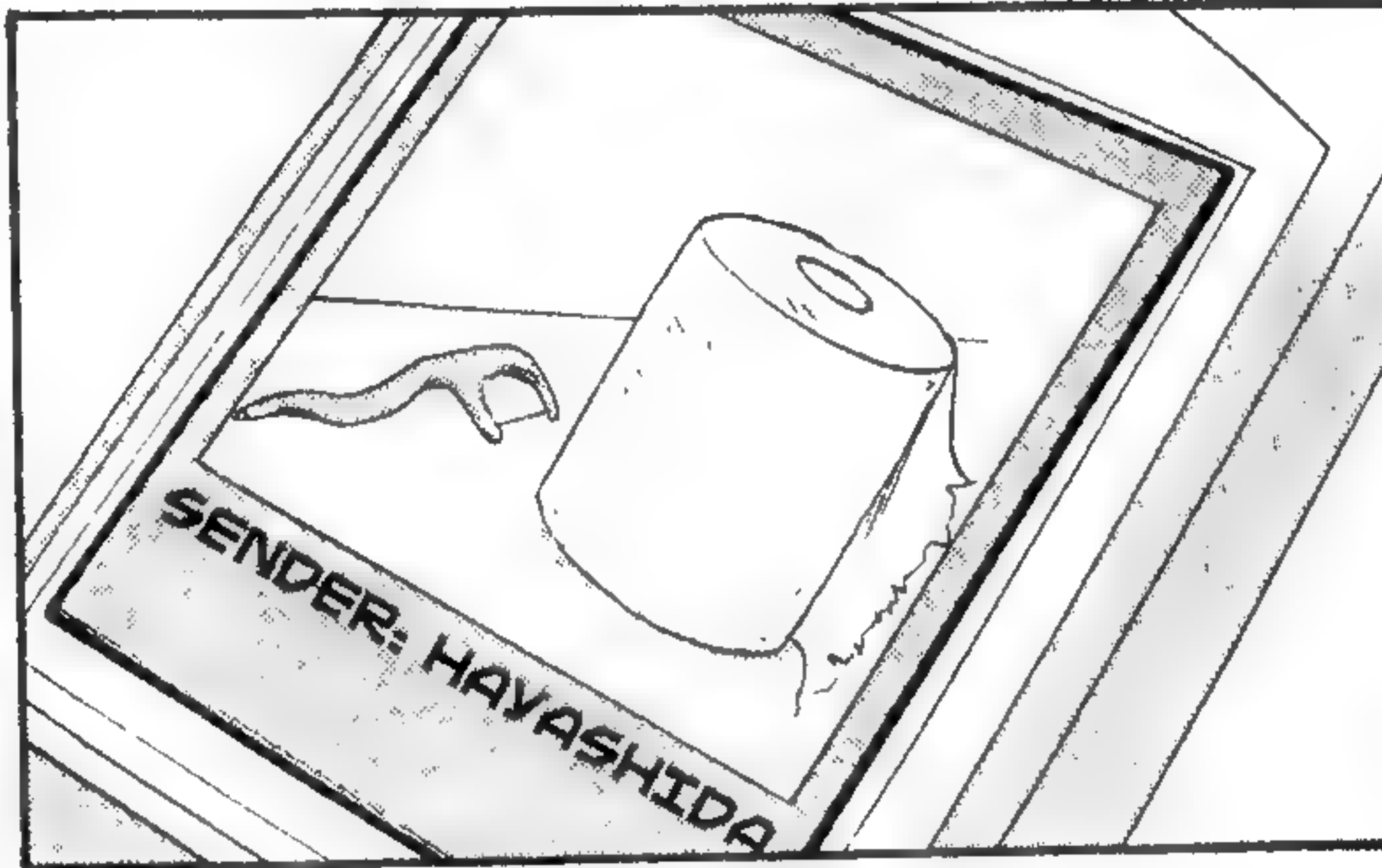
I BET INSTEAD OF A
ROLL OF TOILET PAPER,
THIS TIME IT'LL BE **TWO**
ROLLS OF TOILET PAPER.
THAT'S ABOUT THE LEVEL
OF INTELLIGENCE WE'RE
DEALING WITH HERE.



IT'S JUST
GOING TO
BE ANOTHER
STUPID
PHOTO!



A ROLL
OF TOILET
PAPER AND A
FLOSSER...



SENDER: HAYASHIDA



NO, I'M
NOT OUT
OF TOILET
PAPER.

TNK
カ
カ
カ



THAT
HAYASHIDA'S A
GREAT GUY FOR
WORRYING SO
MUCH ABOUT
ME...

AAH, GOOD. NOW
THAT I'VE MADE
SURE, I'LL REST
EASIER KNOWING
I CAN GO TO
THE BATHROOM
WHENEVER I LIKE.



I HAVE TO
IGNORE
THIS!

NO, NO!

THIS IS
REALLY
GONNA
BUG ME!

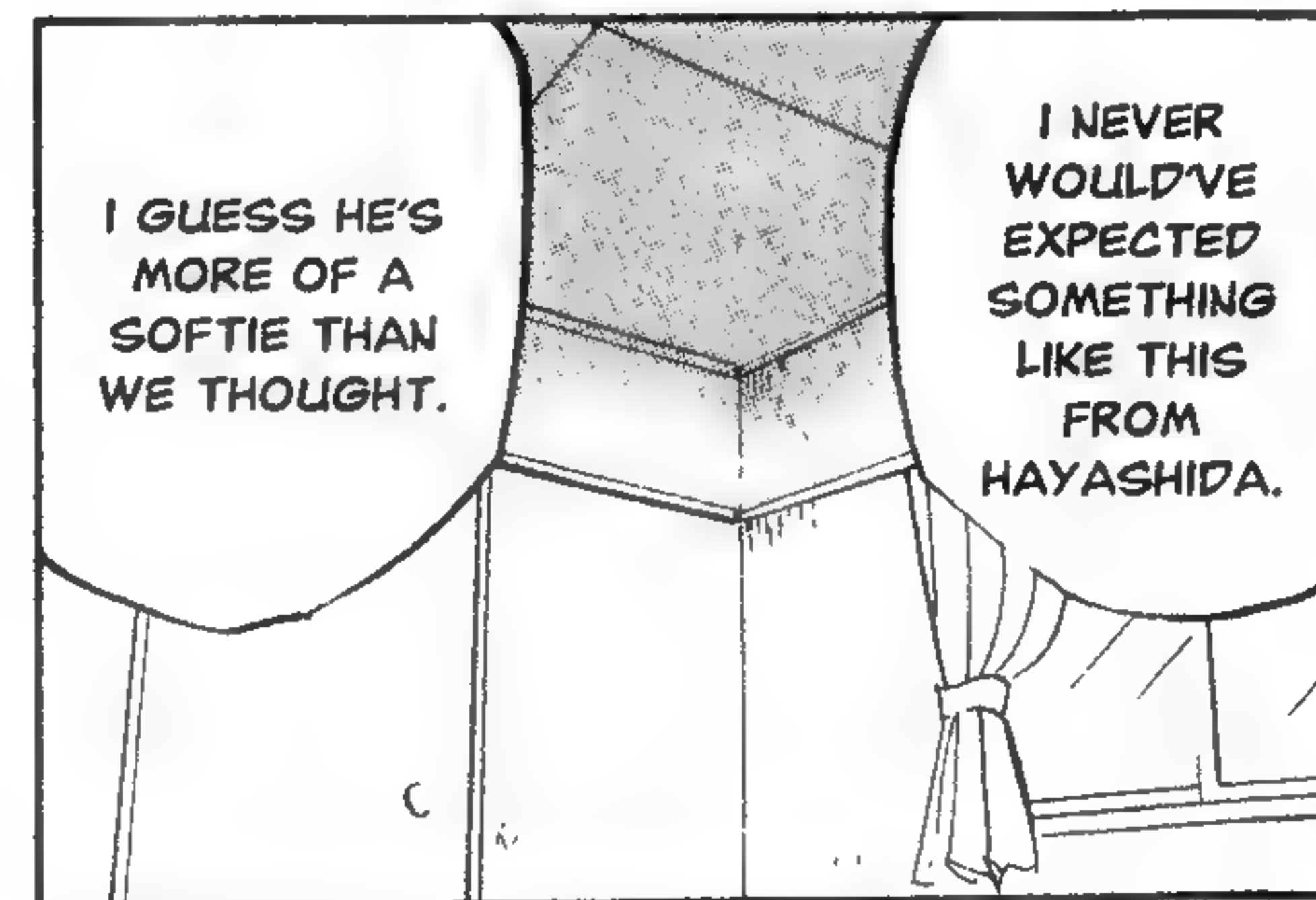
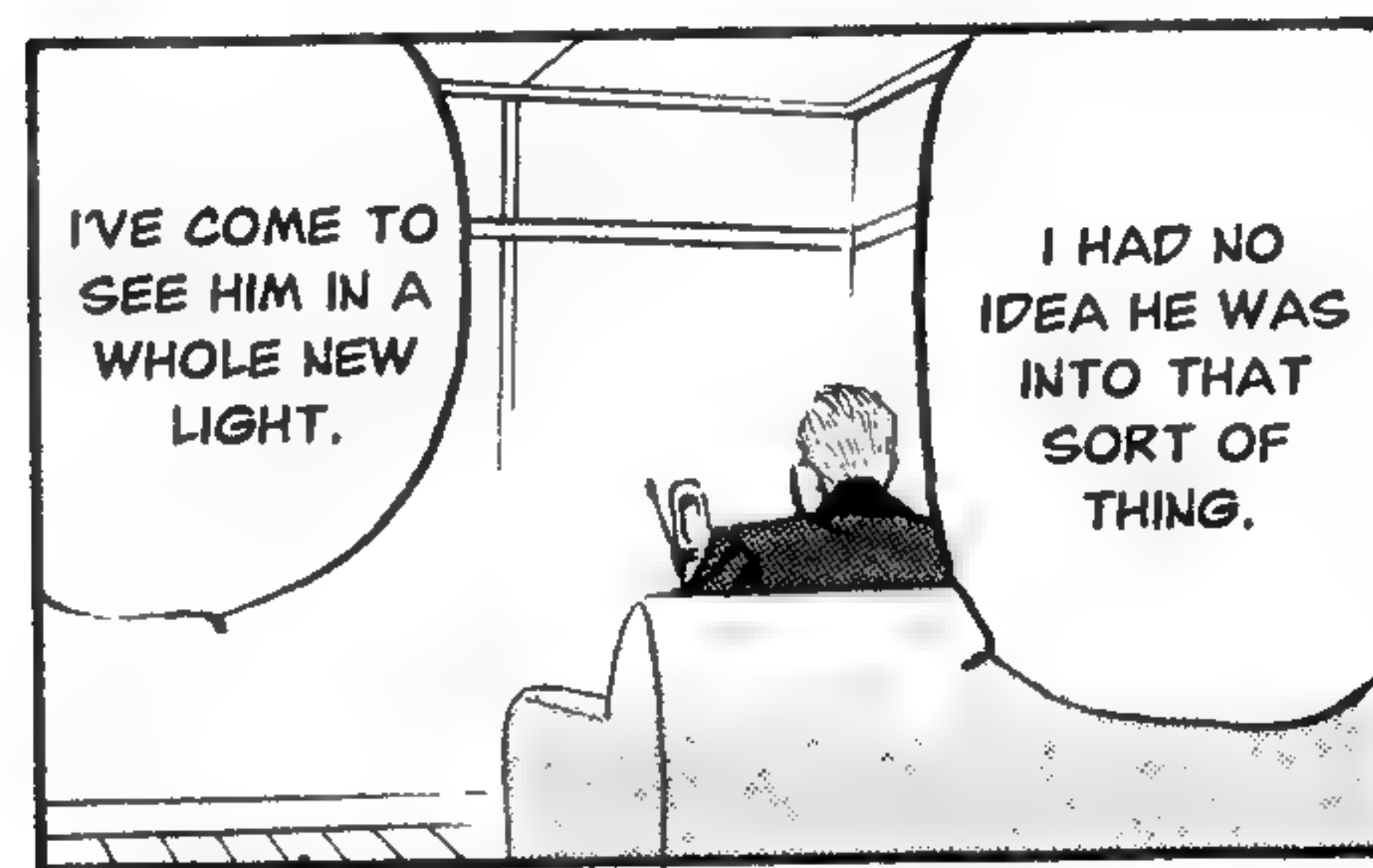
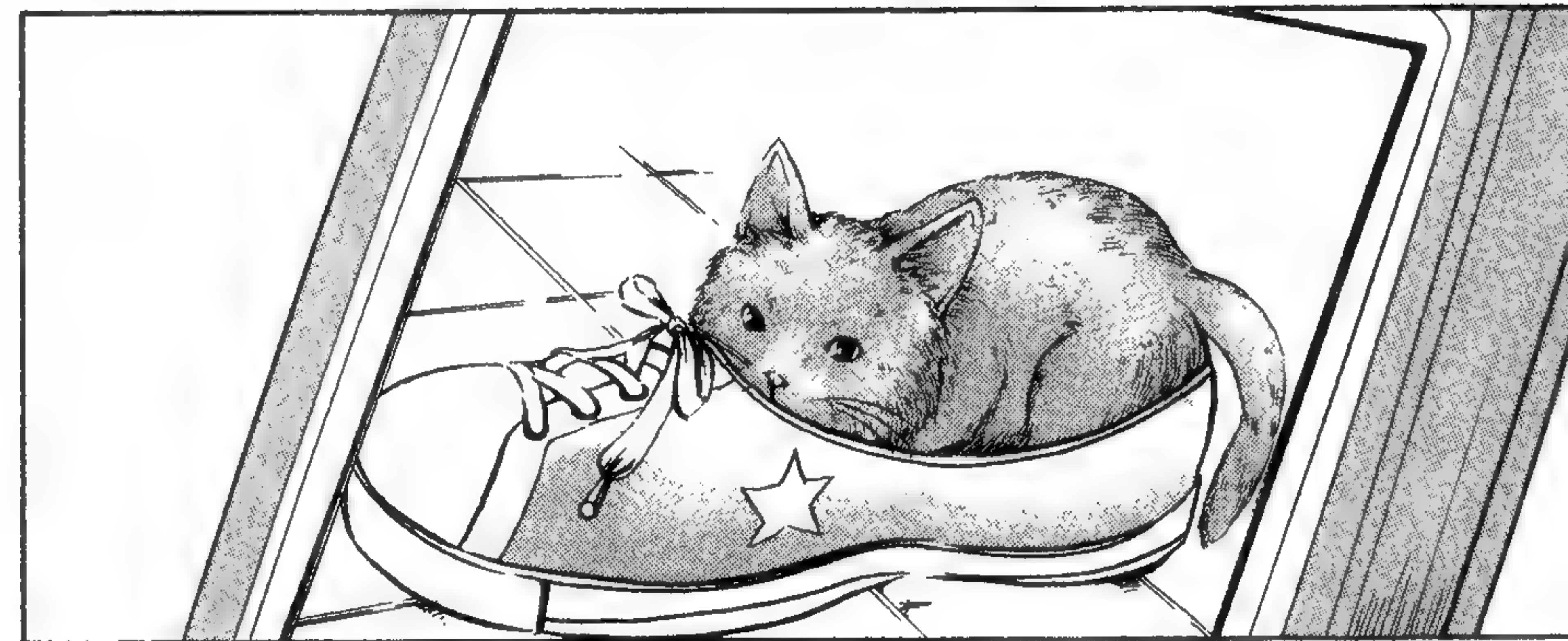
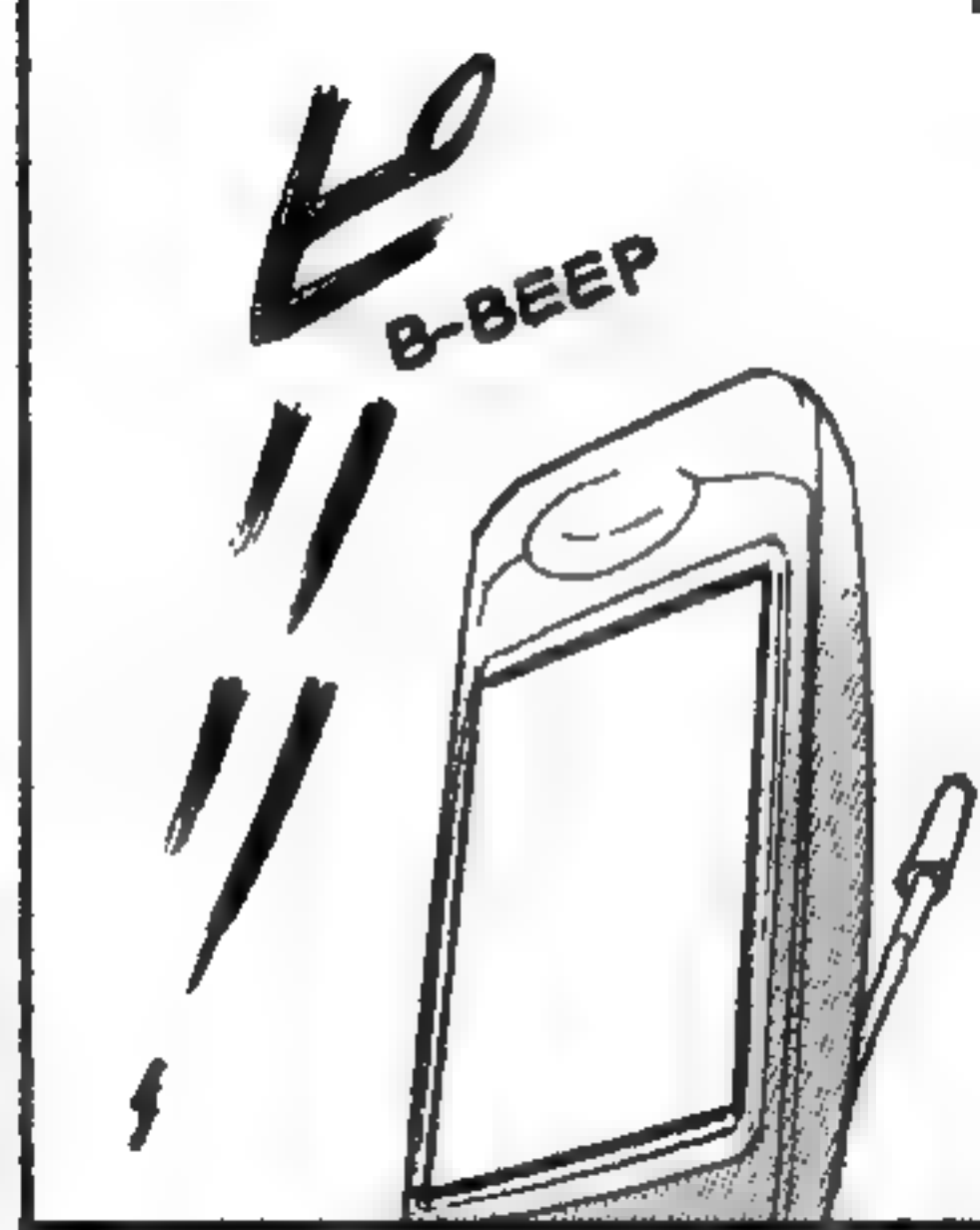
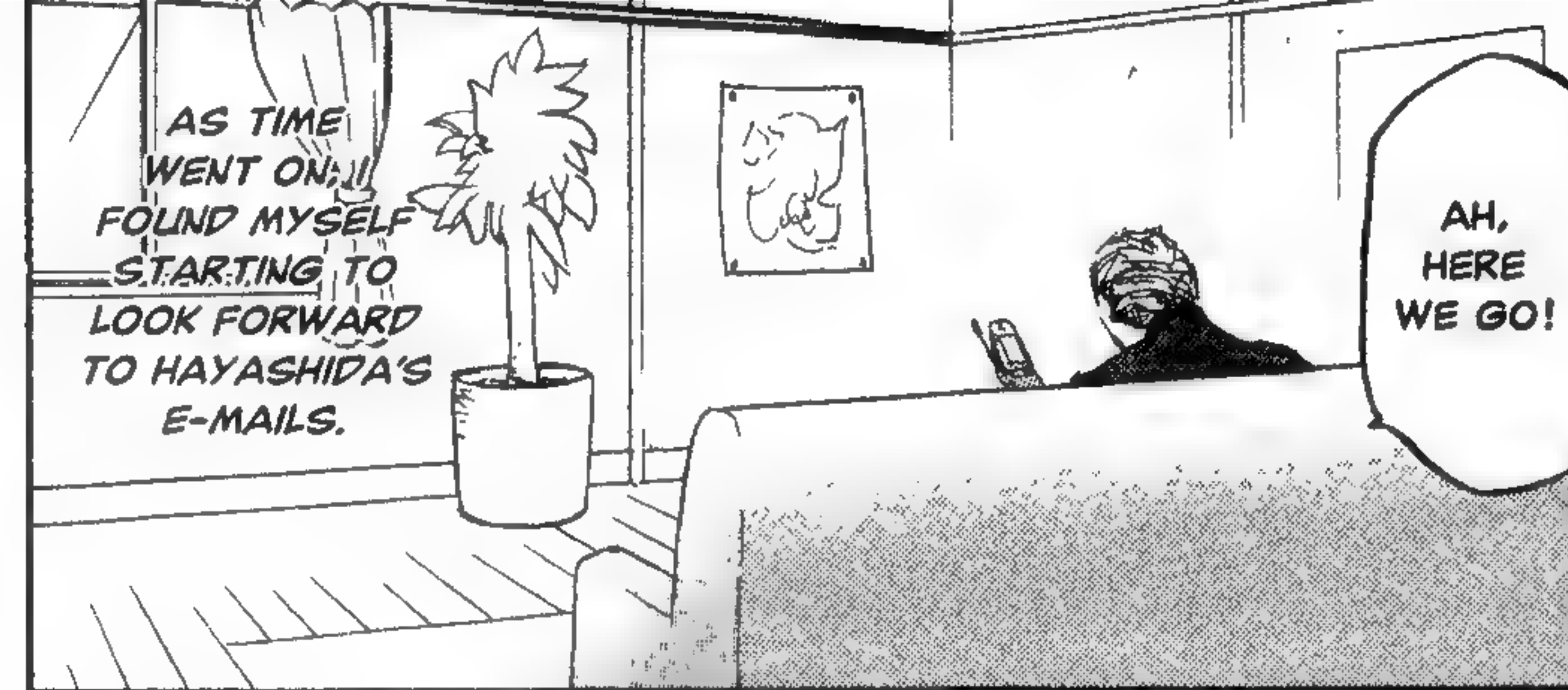
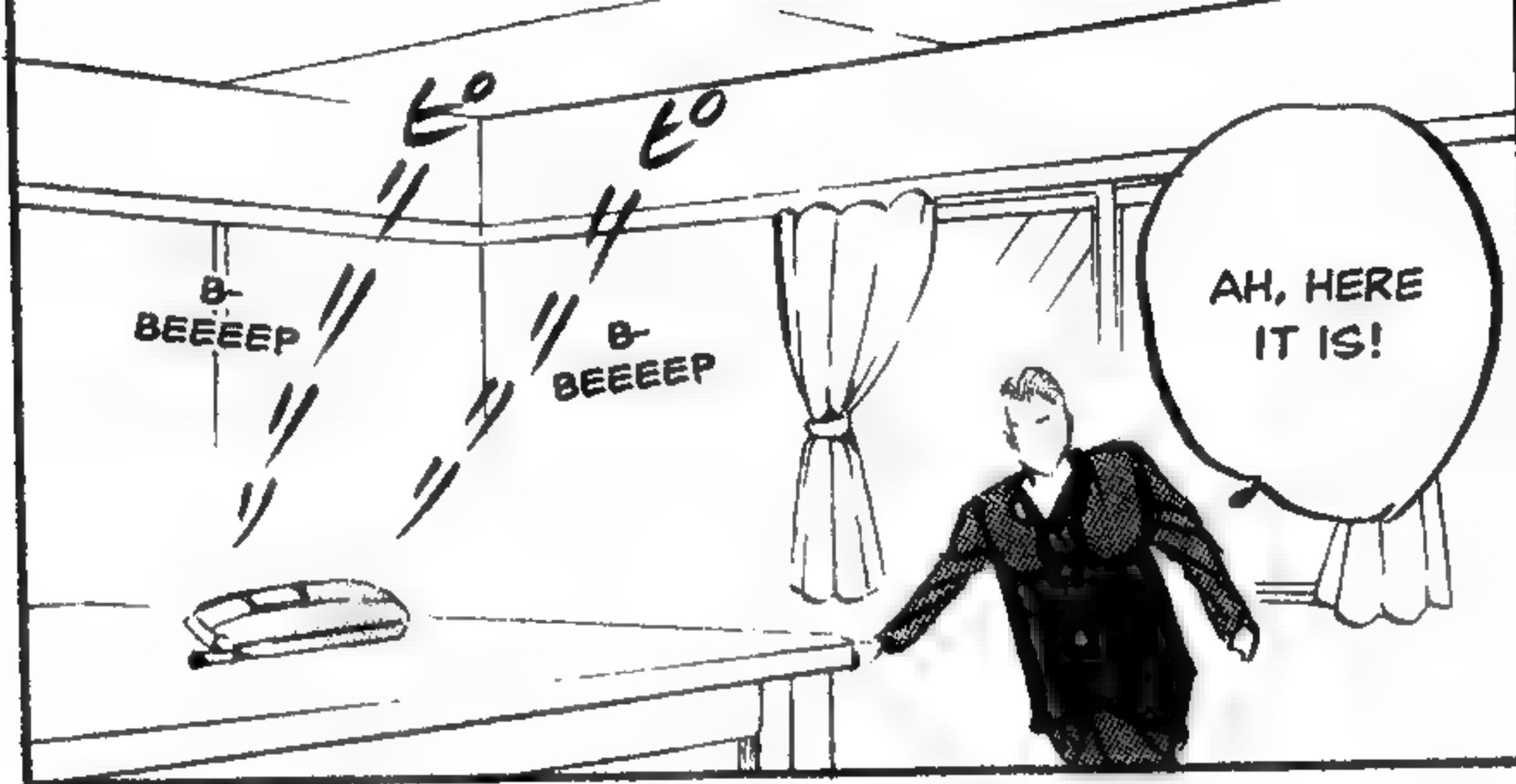
WHAT
THE HELL
IS THAT
SUPPOSED
TO MEAN?!



HE'S JUST
SENDING ME
MEANINGLESS
PHOTOS AT
RANDOM!

P-THNK
ホ
ニ

THERE'S NO
WAY THAT
CAN BE
RIGHT!





I GUESS
HE'S PROBABLY
SHY AND
DOESN'T WANT
TO SHOW HER.

I WONDER
WHAT KIND
OF GIRL
SHE IS.

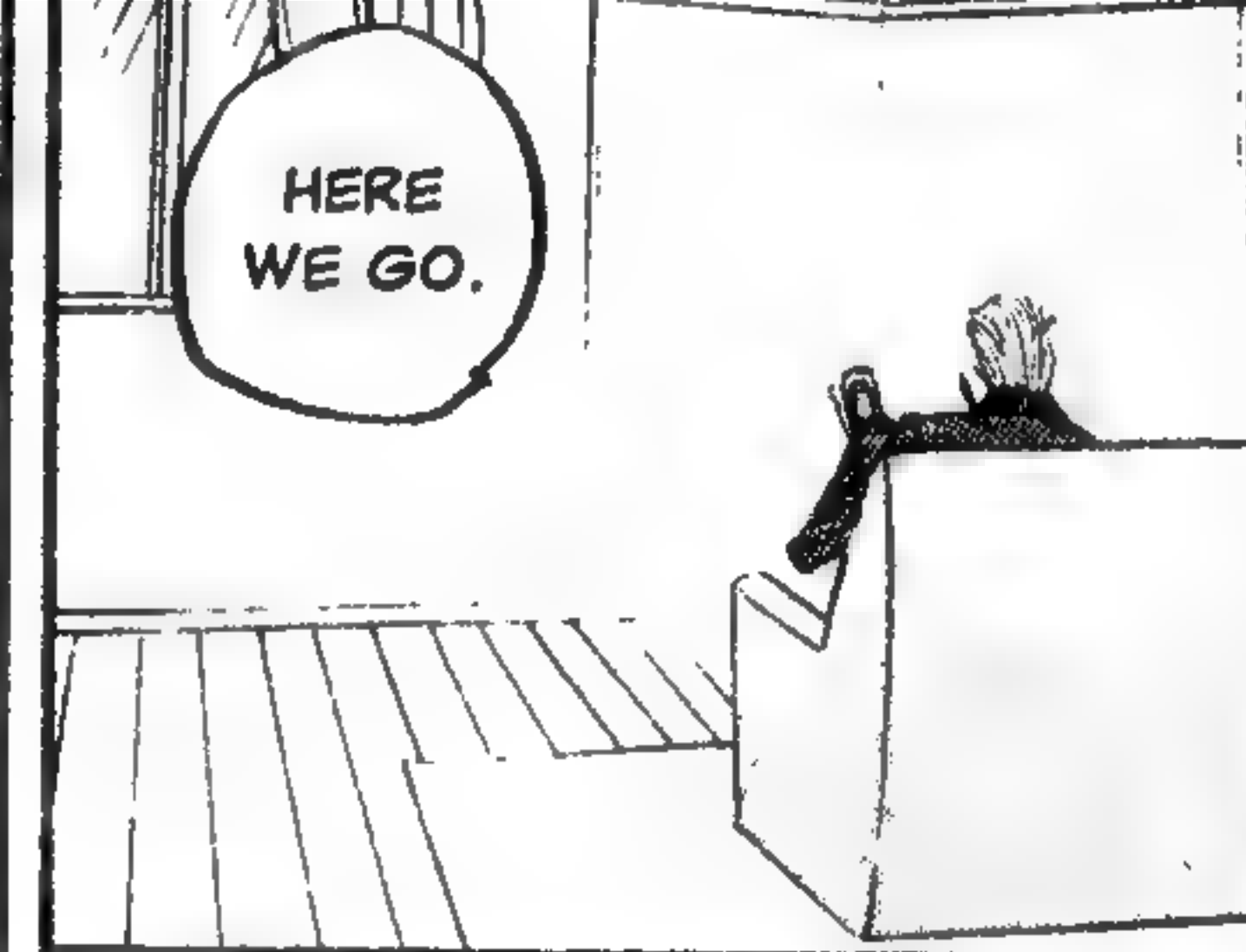


LOOK AT
HOW HAPPY
HE LOOKS.
WAHAHA!

AAAAH!
HE'S
HOLDING
HER HAND!



HM?



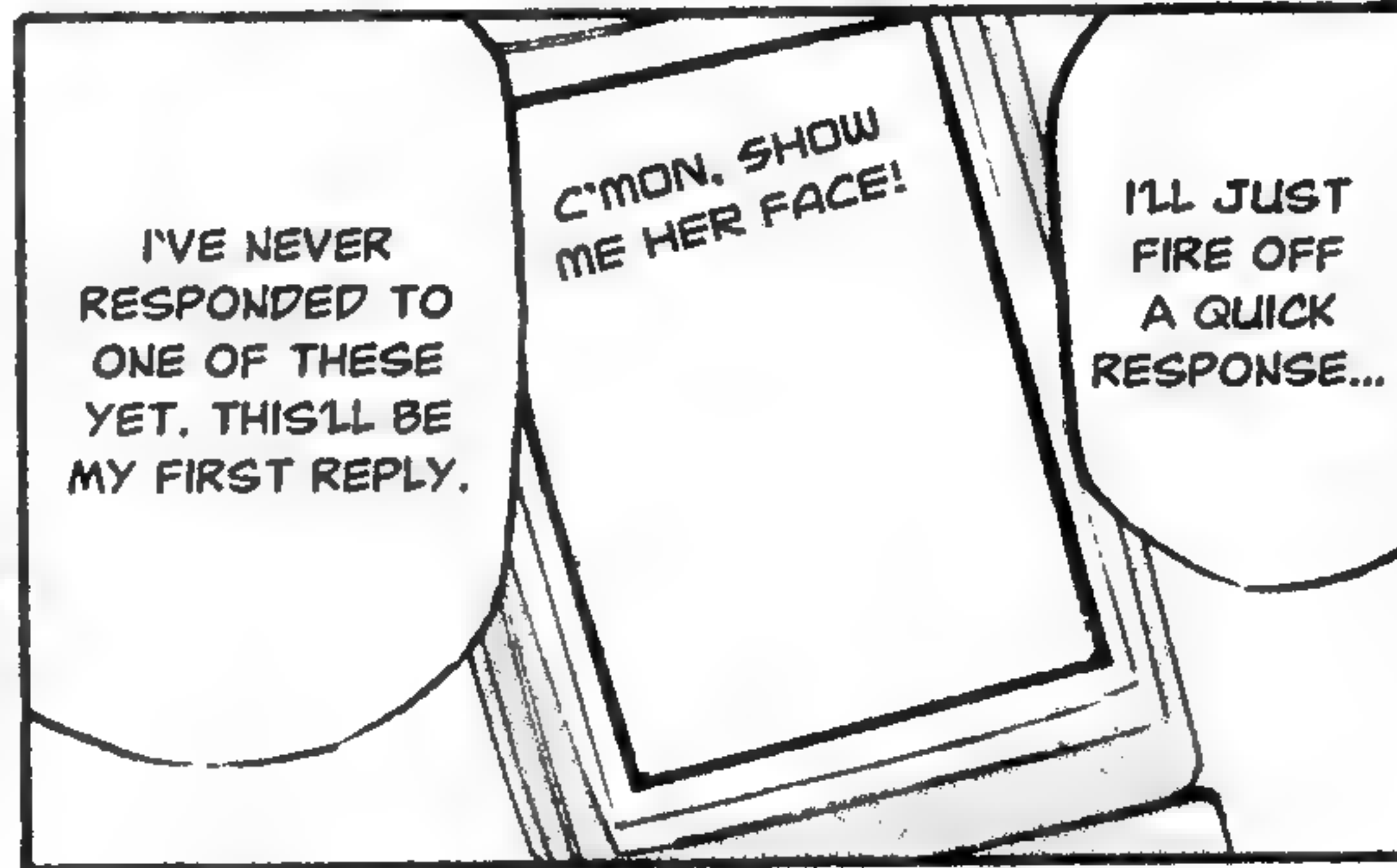
HERE
WE GO.



B-BEEP



THREE
DAYS
LATER



I'VE NEVER
RESPONDED TO
ONE OF THESE
YET. THIS'LL BE
MY FIRST REPLY.

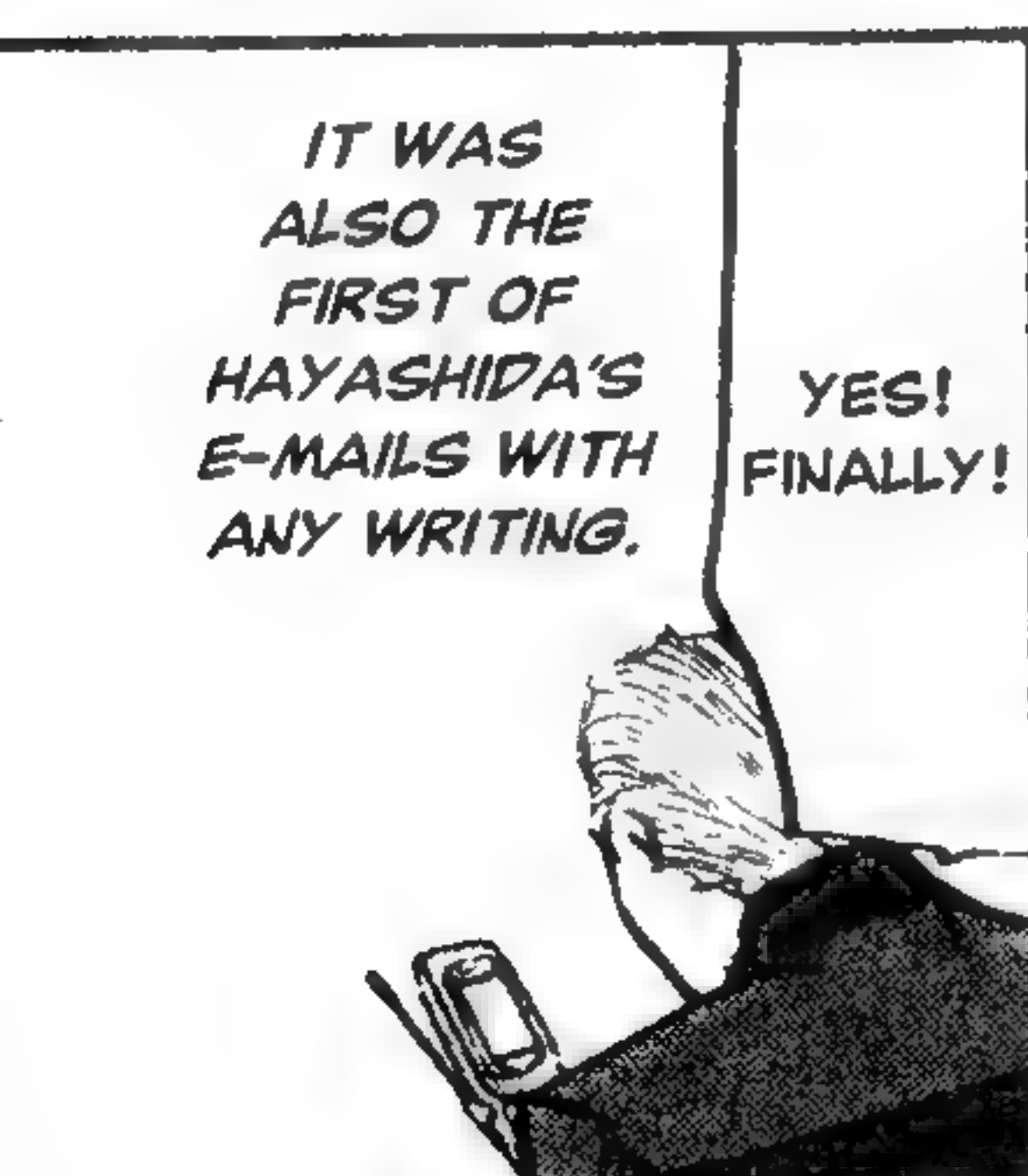
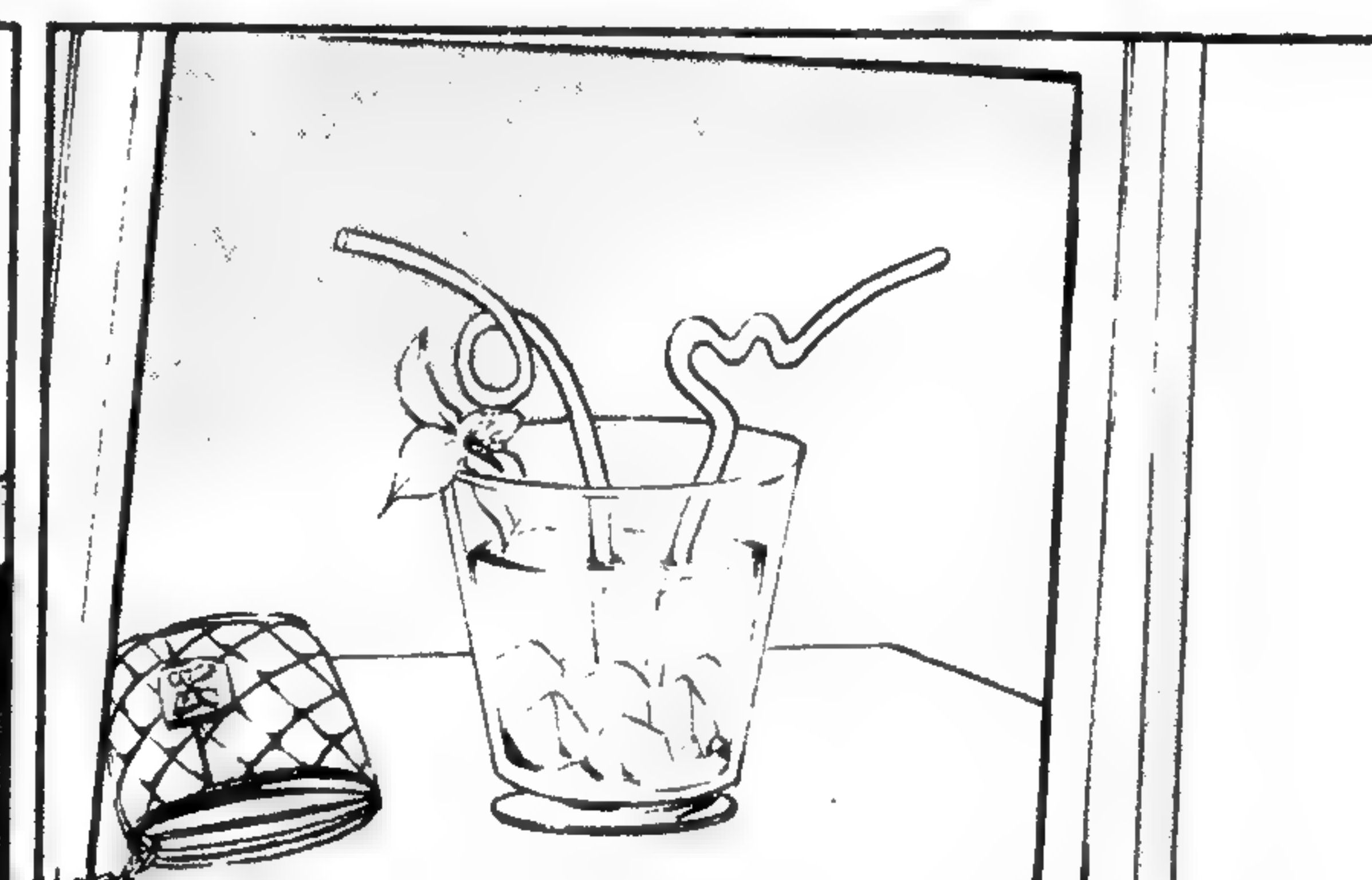
C'MON. SHOW
ME HER FACE!

I'LL JUST
FIRE OFF
A QUICK
RESPONSE...



IS HE
ON A
DATE?

HUH?



IT WAS
ALSO THE
FIRST OF
HAYASHIDA'S
E-MAILS WITH
ANY WRITING.

YES!
FINALLY!

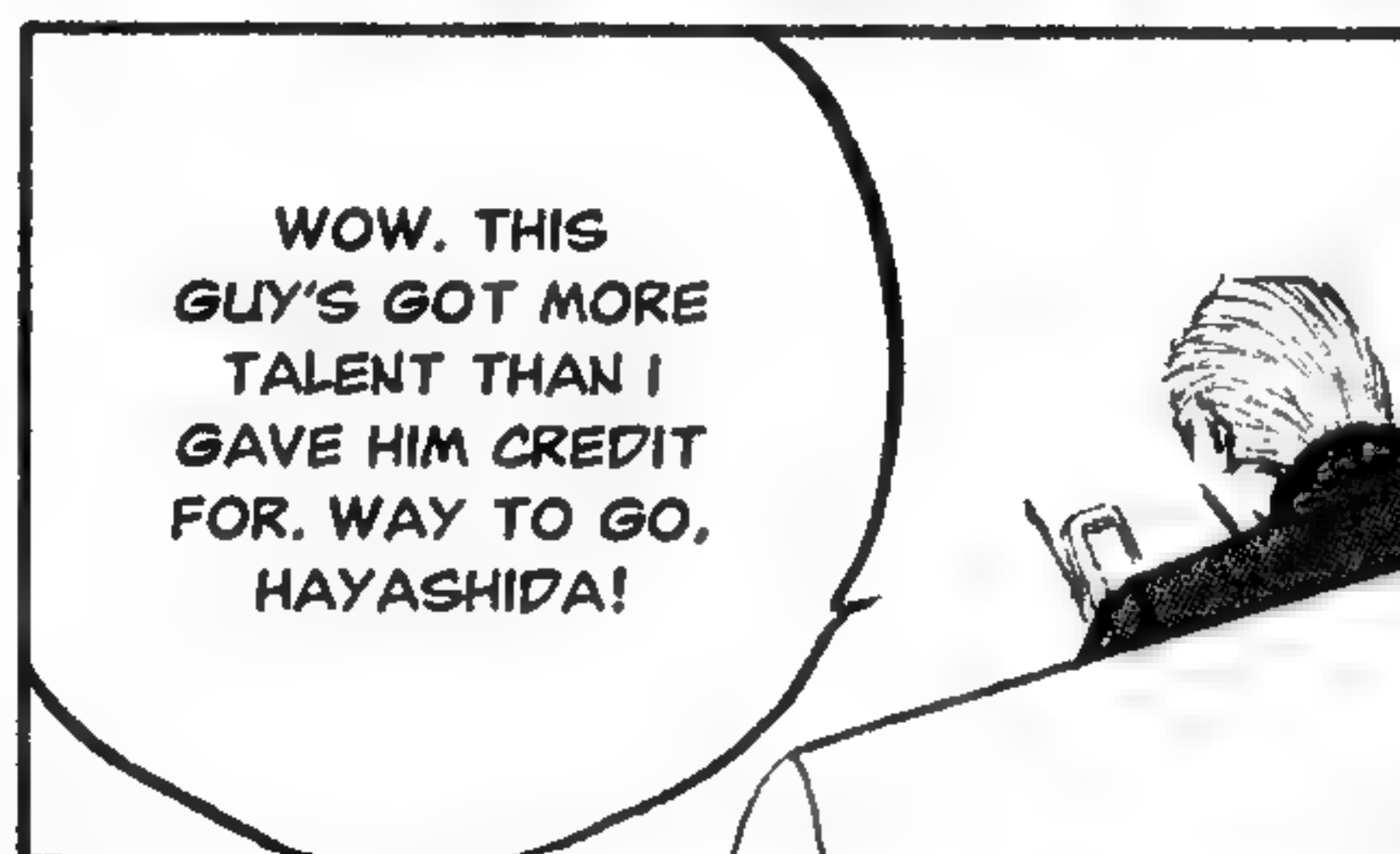


IN ANSWER TO
YOUR REQUEST,
I GIVE YOU HER
FACE.

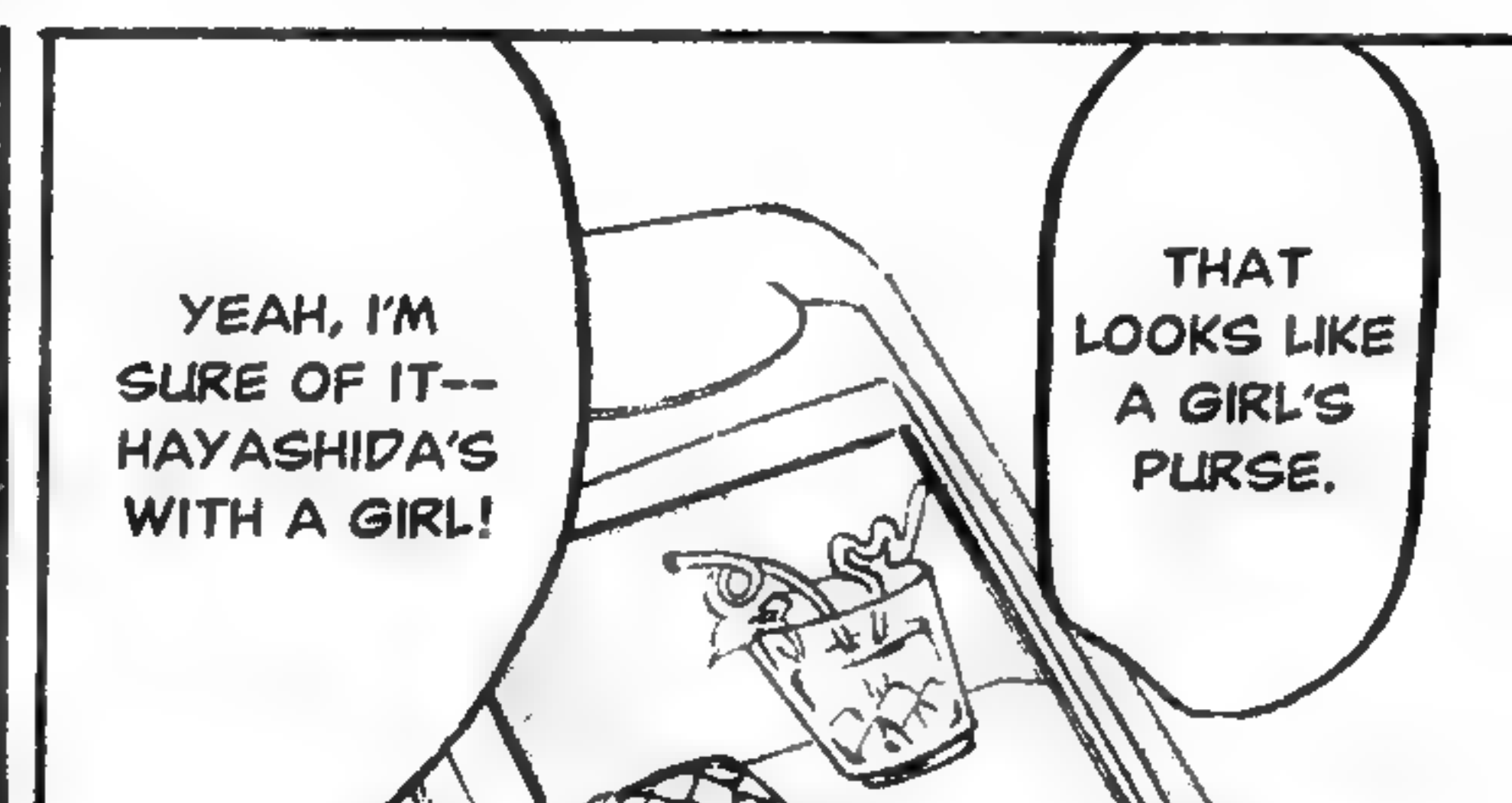
- HAYASHIDA



HERE
IT IS!

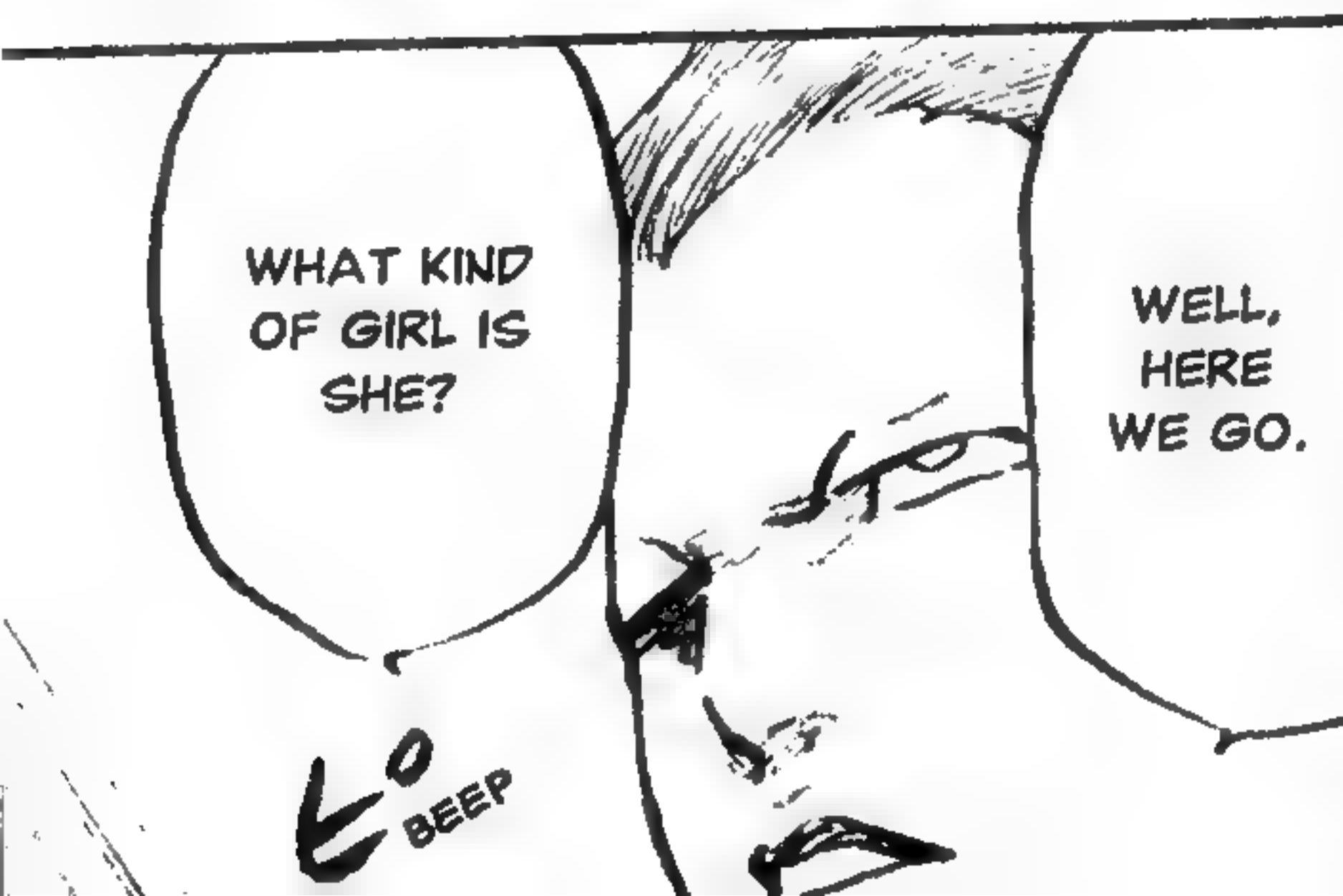


WOW. THIS
GUY'S GOT MORE
TALENT THAN I
GAVE HIM CREDIT
FOR. WAY TO GO,
HAYASHIDA!



YEAH, I'M
SURE OF IT--
HAYASHIDA'S
WITH A GIRL!

THAT
LOOKS LIKE
A GIRL'S
PURSE.



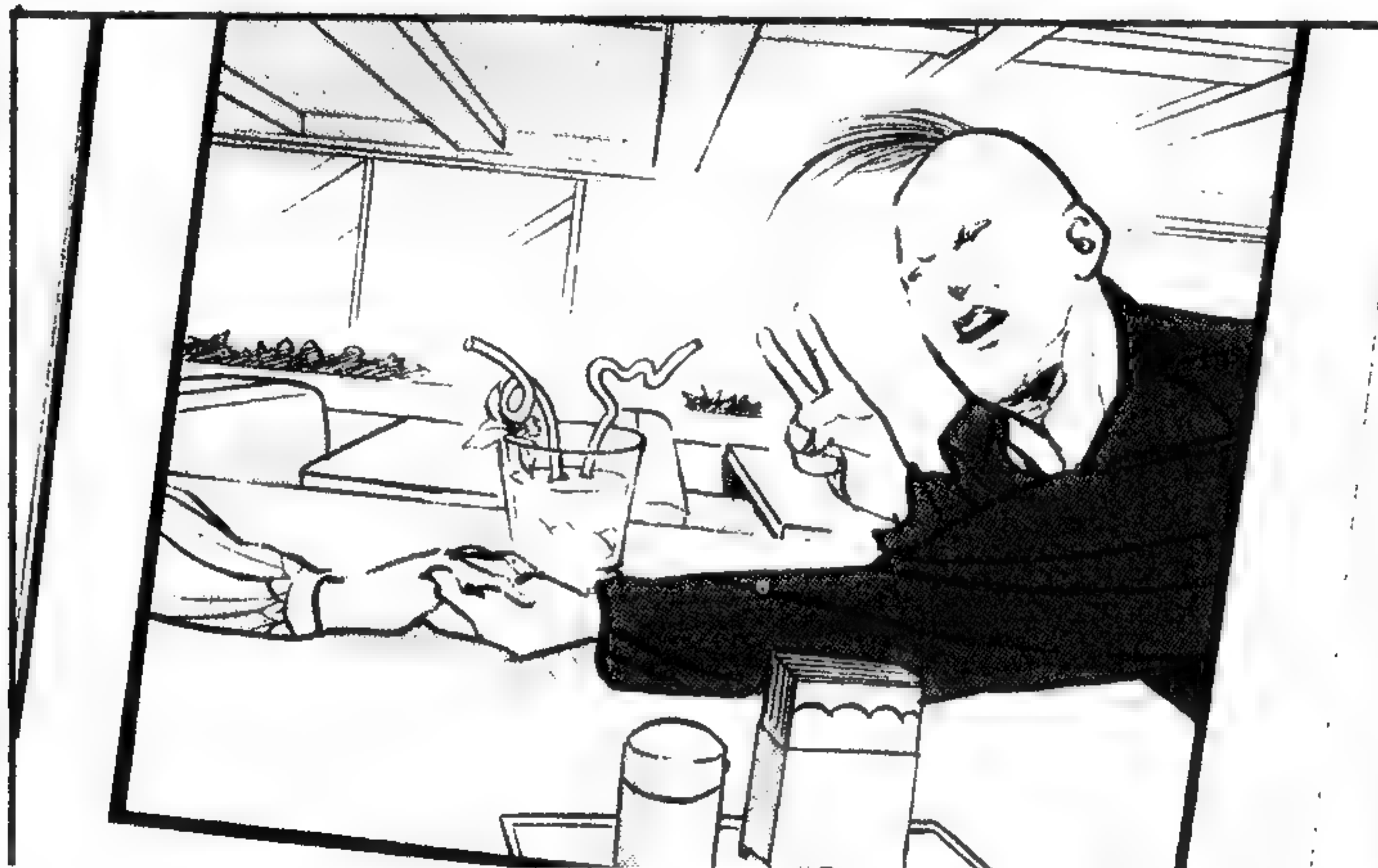
WHAT KIND
OF GIRL IS
SHE?

WELL,
HERE
WE GO.



I WAS HAPPY
THAT WE'D
STARTED
OUR E-MAIL
EXCHANGE.

I FELT LIKE
HAYASHIDA AND
I HAD FINALLY
BECOME ABLE TO
COMMUNICATE WITH
EACH OTHER.



HM?

BEEP
GO

CROMARTIE NEWS

CROMARTIE HIGH SCHOOL

VOL. 1



Eiji Nonaka

FOR REAL?! CROMARTIE HIGH SCHOOL— FIRST JAPAN, NOW THE WORLD!

Not long ago, a shocking truth came to light. I think some of you already know that *Cromartie High School* was made into an anime. That alone was almost too shocking in its shockingness... but this ups the shock factor even more. Prepare yourselves—both the anime and (riding on its coattails) this very manga will be going on sale IN AMERICA!

← The cover in question

LOL, is this really OK? And I mean that in any number of ways... Seriously, I think even some native Japanese people don't get the humor of this manga--what will Americans think? "Hey, these students are wearing uniforms!" maybe. I get the feeling the whole point of the comic could easily get lost... Is this really OK?!

By the way, the back cover calls *Cromartie* "Japan's #1 comedy" and declares it the "winner of the Kodansha Manga Award." That's some nice ad copy, a blend of truth and fiction. But I doubt anyone is going to know what the Kodansha Manga Awards are.

JAPAN'S #1 COMEDY IS HERE!

DO YOU HAVE WHAT IT TAKES TO
MAKE IT IN CROMARTIE HIGH?

Do you have a "dign. nickname?"
☐ Yes ☐ No
 How many girls have you been in?
☐ None ☐ 5-10 ☐ More than 100
☐ None - no one ever had the stones to challenge me
 What's in your backpack?
☐ My homework ☐ A metal plate
 How much do you suck? Check all that apply
☐ Propagator ☐ Headbar mustache
☐ Carpet of chest hair ☐ Sexy swagga
☐ Shaved eyebrows ☐ Menopausal glare
 Say you checked out eleven adol. videos. Three of those were new releases, do you still get a return? (Don't cheat!)
 Any how many videos do you have left?
☐ 3 ☐ 6 ☐ 11 - I would never give them back

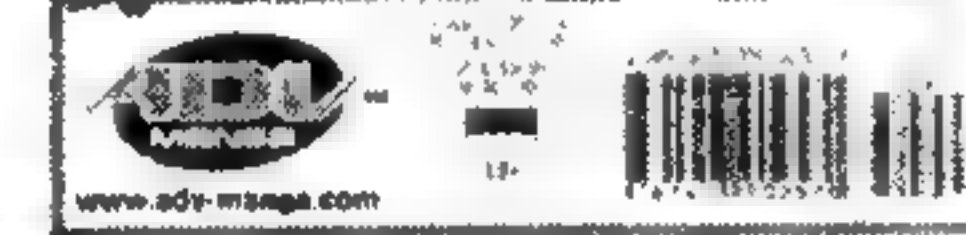
How did you rate?

2+ points or less
☐ 10+ ☐ 15
☐ 30+ ☐ 100



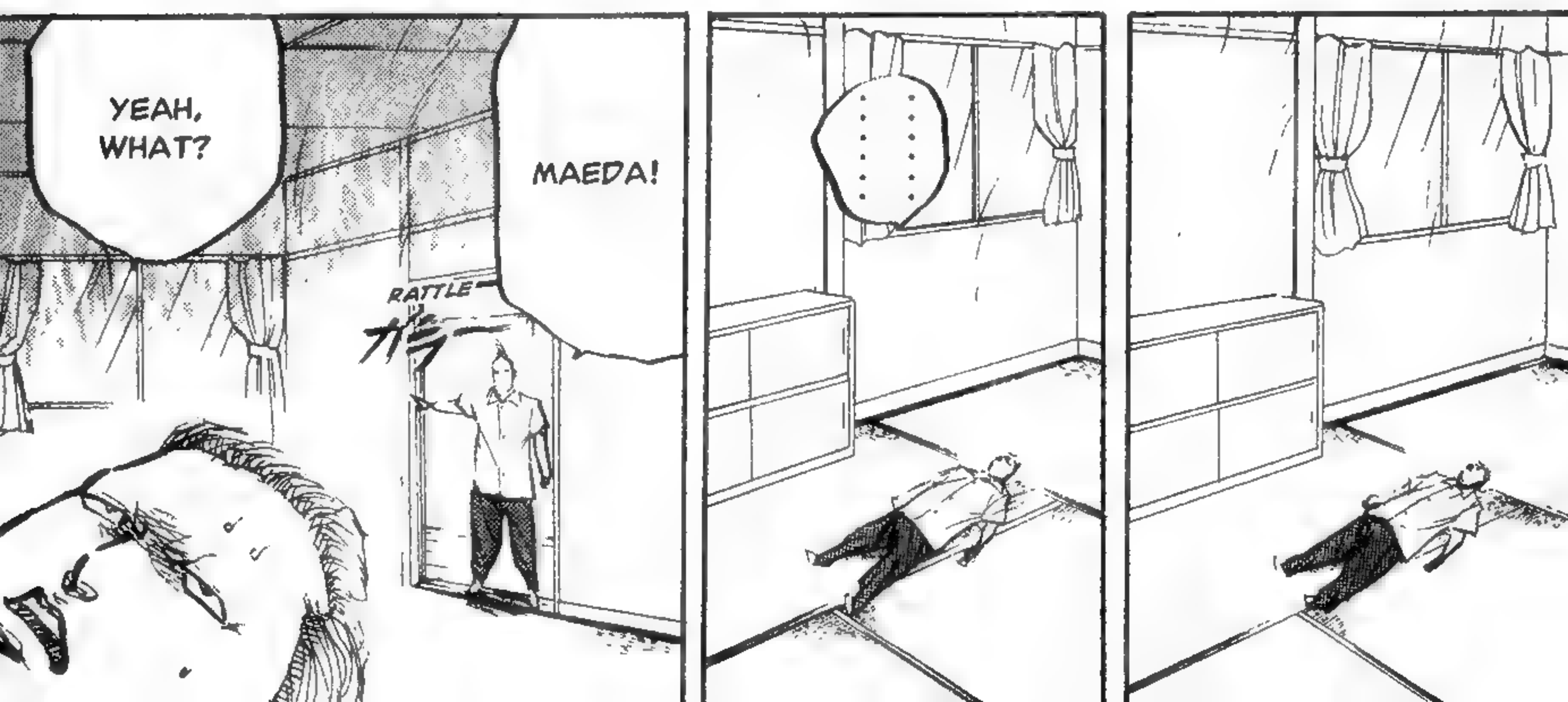
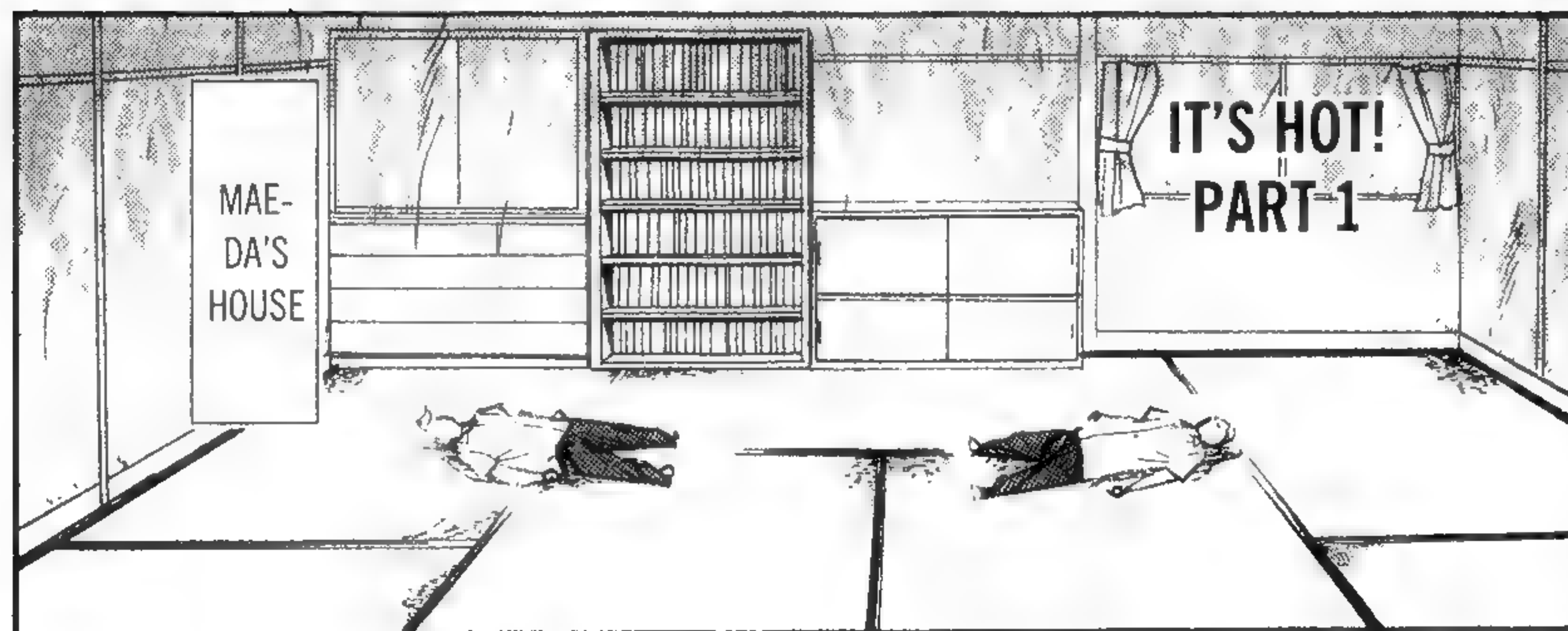
Get your
Mochazawa
C10" Pinch
from ADV Toys!

Also an
Anime DVD
from ADV
Films!



HAYASHIDA, YOU'RE A DAREDEVIL.

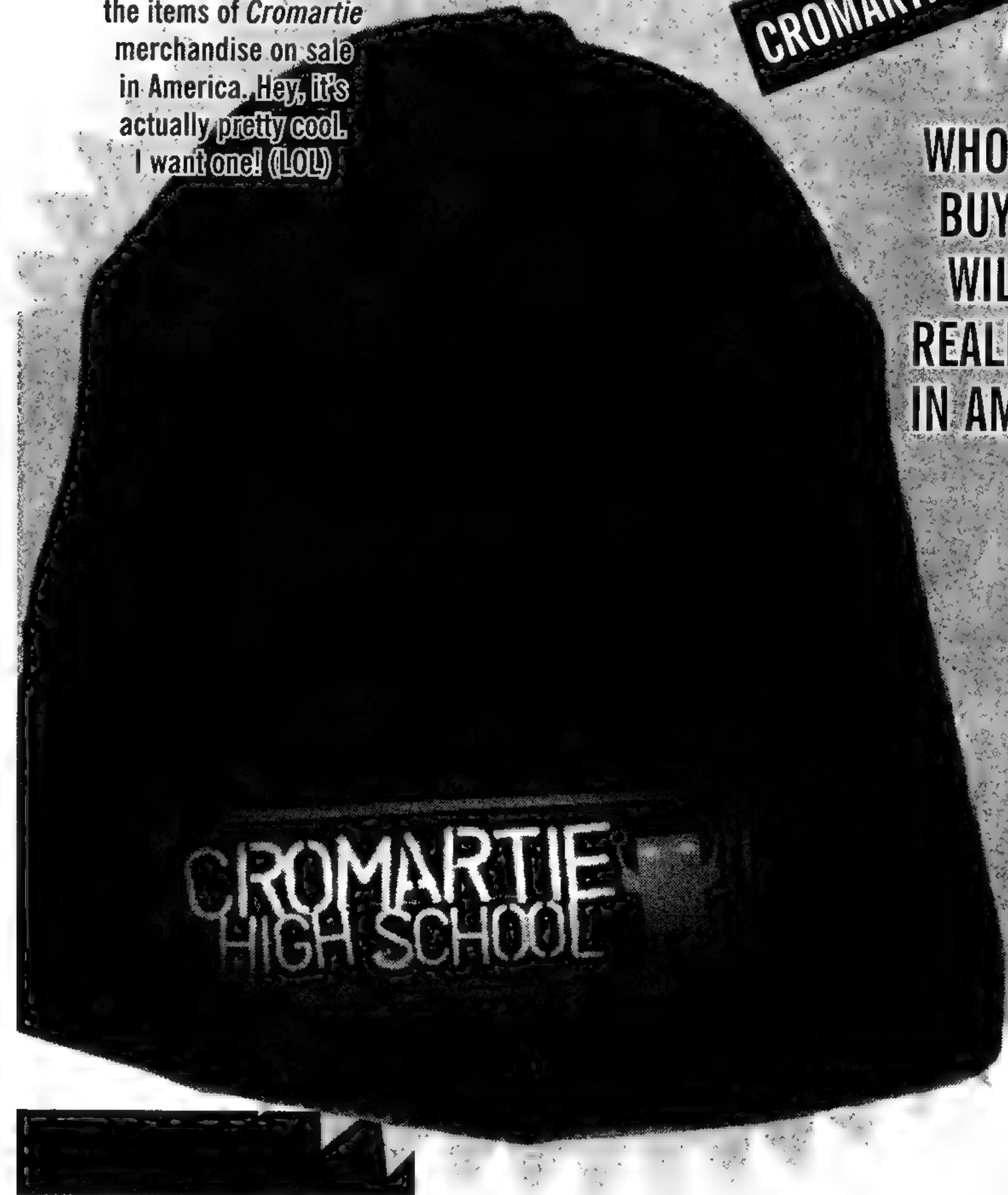
CHAPTER 241: **IN THE HEAT OF THE DAY**



This knit cap is one of the items of *Cromartie* merchandise on sale in America. Hey, it's actually pretty cool. I want one! (LOL)

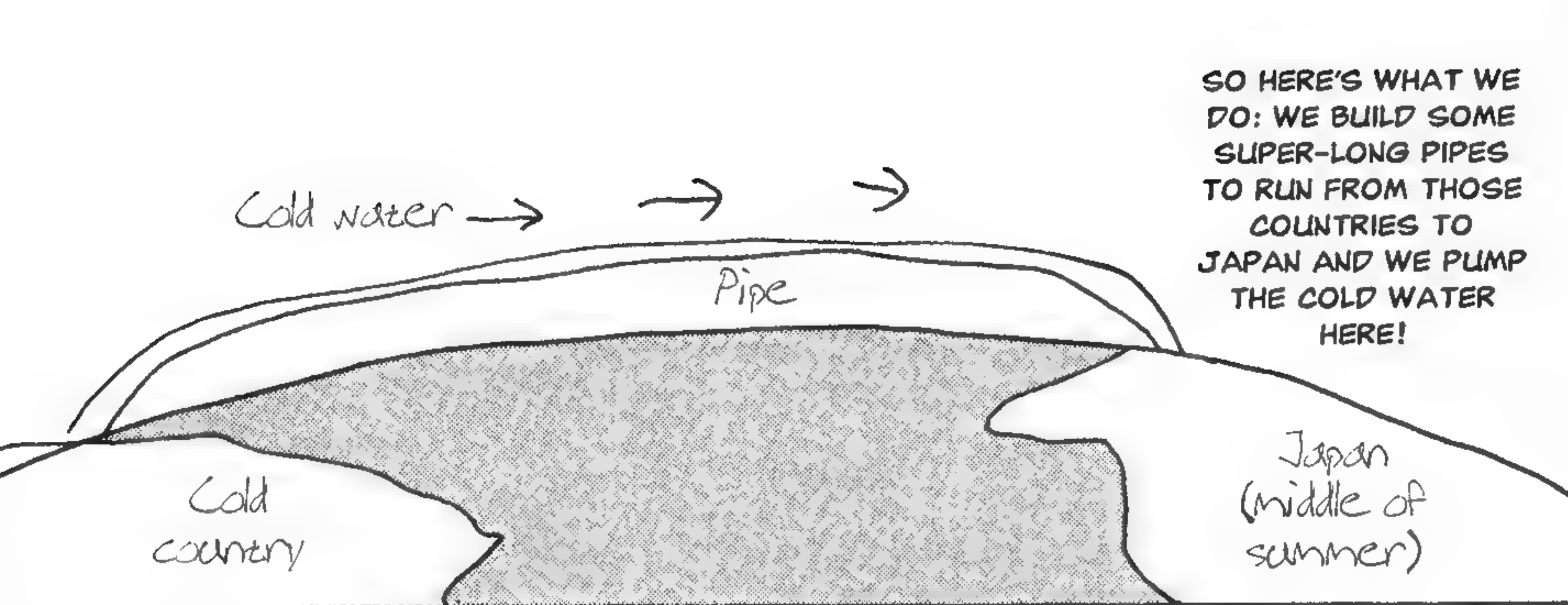
CROMARTIE NEWS

**WHO WOULD BUY THIS?!
WILL THIS REALLY WORK
IN AMERICA?!**



Tying into my earlier note about *Cromartie* making its way to America (where the anime apparently aired on TV—that's pretty incredible in and of itself), the decision has been made to also produce *Cromartie* merchandise! Will this really fly in America?!

Considering what I've heard about the state of world affairs, I've come to suspect that this sort of thing *won't* work in America...and I bet I'm right. Of course it won't work in America—this stuff doesn't even sell in Japan! (LOL) So yeah, I'm worried... but whatever. I'll just wait for some Hollywood star to admit to being a *Cromartie* fan.



SO HERE'S WHAT WE DO: WE BUILD SOME SUPER-LONG PIPES TO RUN FROM THOSE COUNTRIES TO JAPAN AND WE PUMP THE COLD WATER HERE!

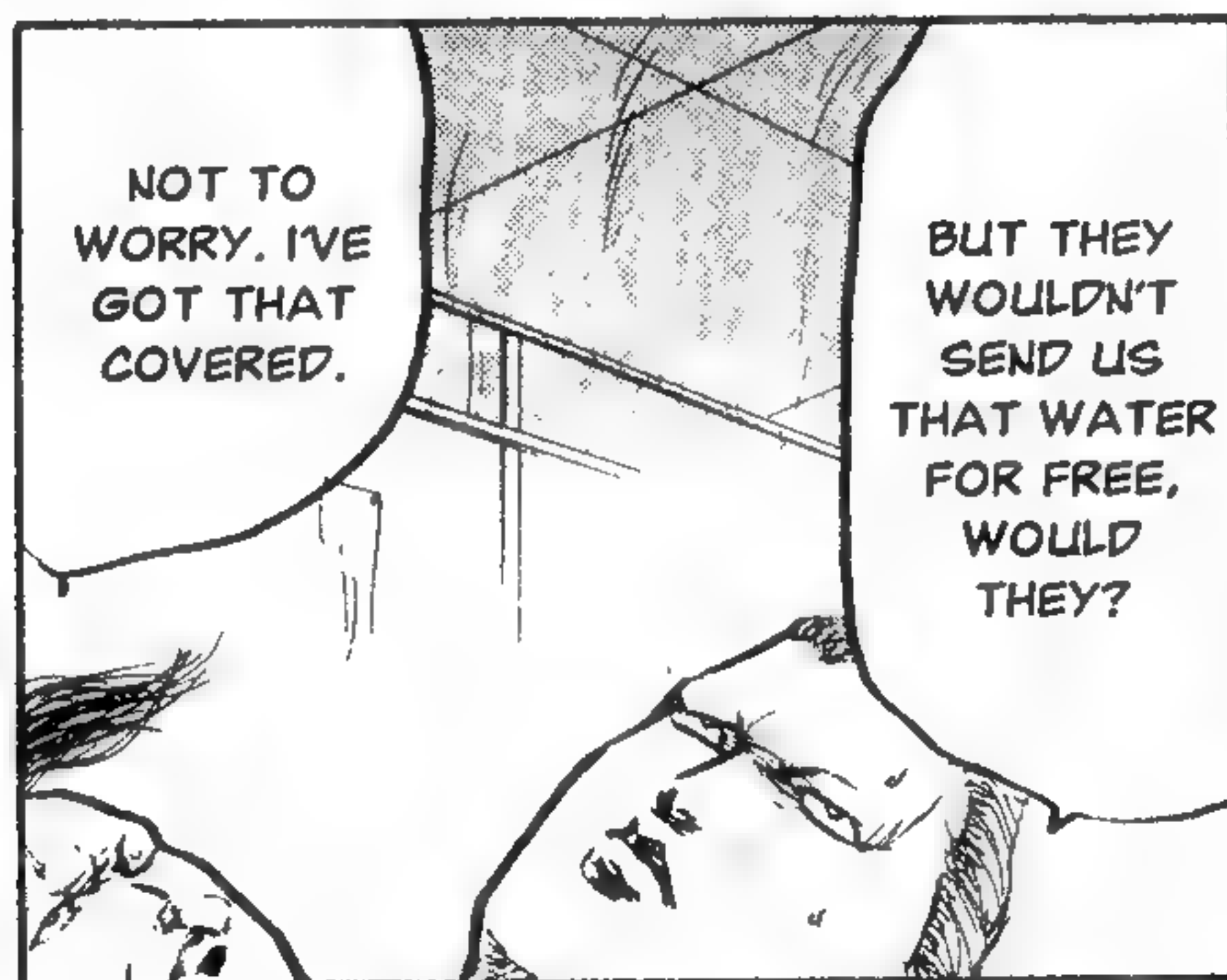


WELL, IT'S SUMMER.

IT WAS PRACTICALLY BOILING!

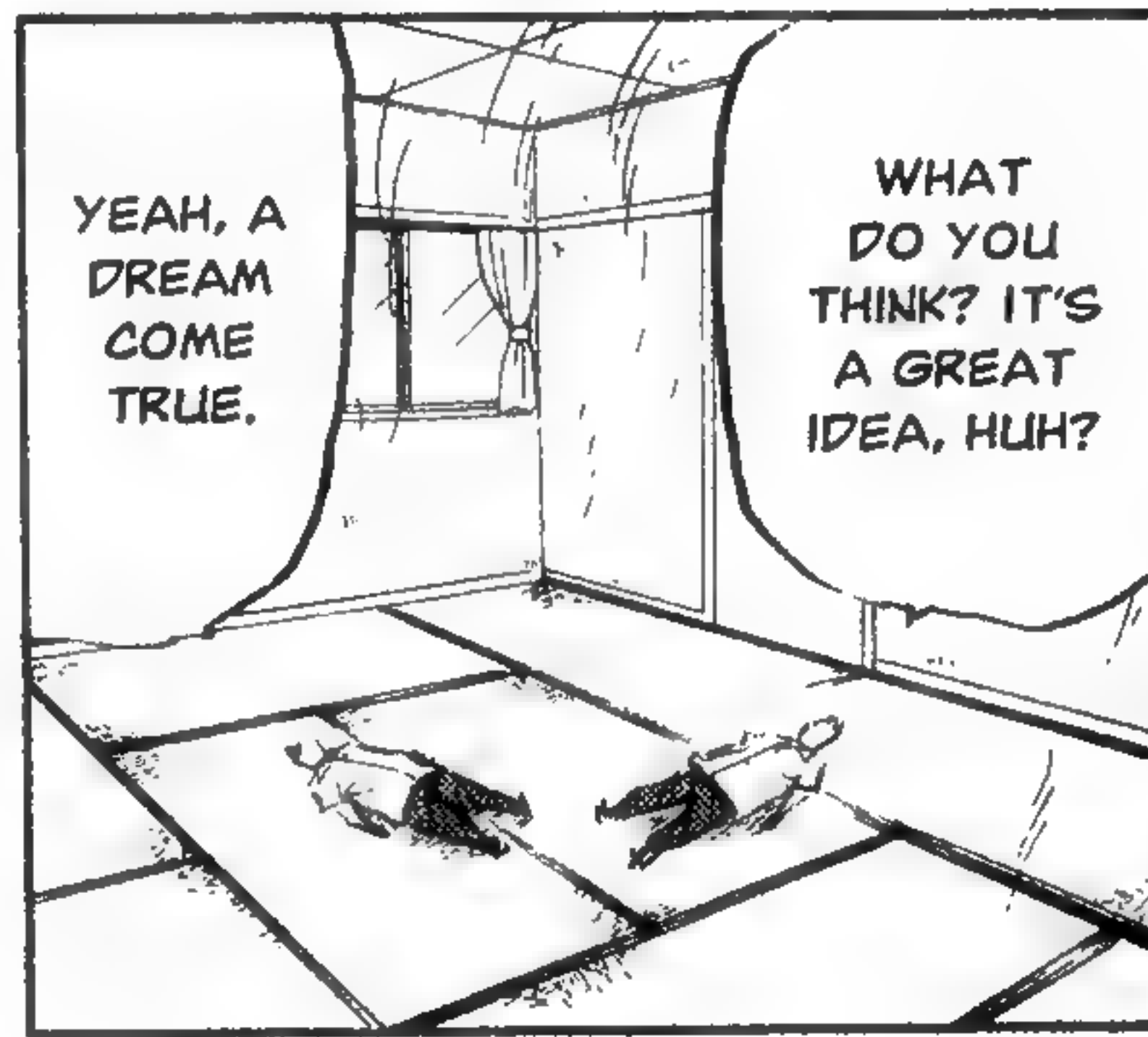


TALK ABOUT A SHOCK... THAT SHOWER JUST NOW WAS REALLY HOT.



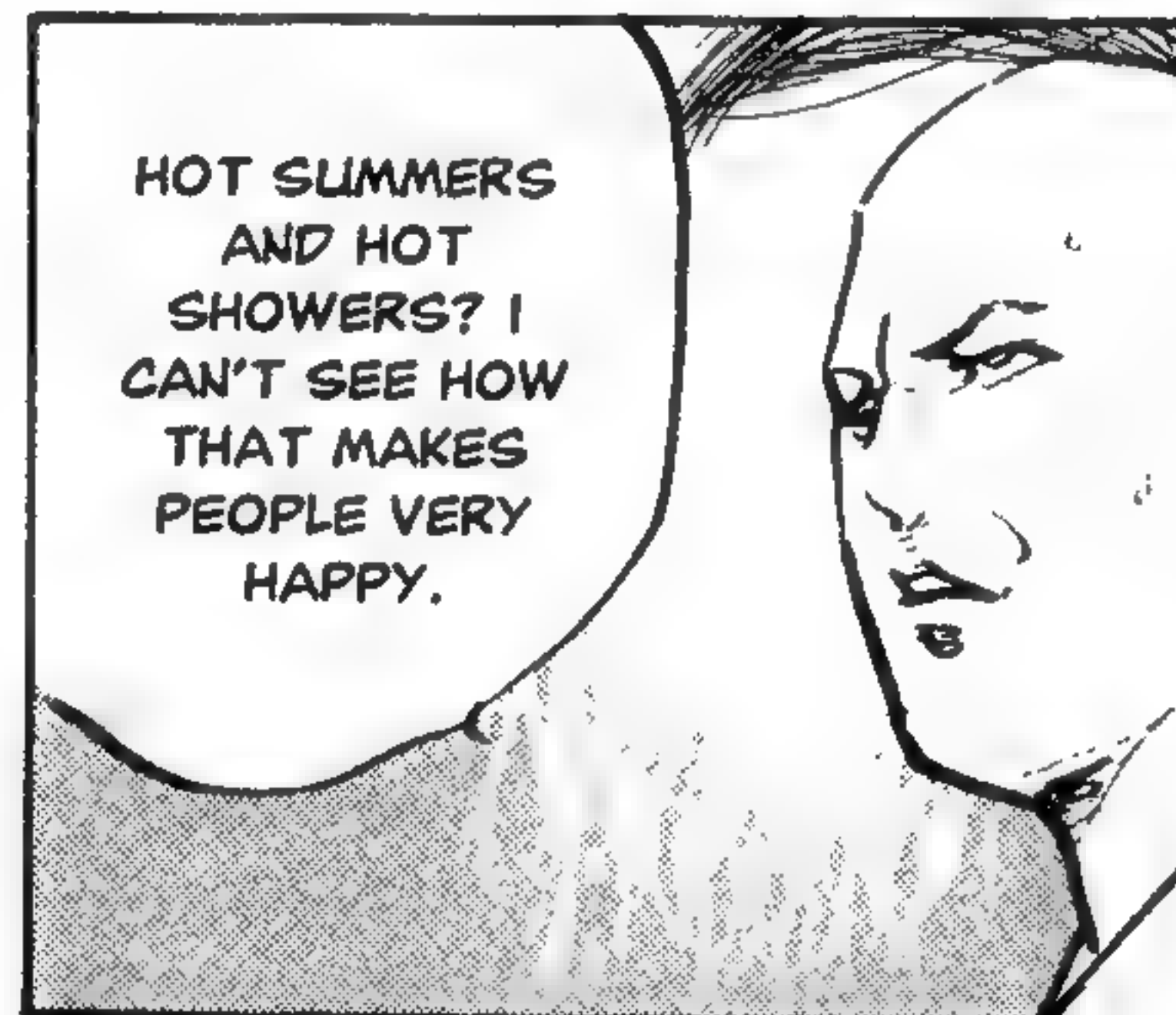
NOT TO WORRY. I'VE GOT THAT COVERED.

BUT THEY WOULDN'T SEND US THAT WATER FOR FREE, WOULD THEY?



YEAH, A DREAM COME TRUE.

WHAT DO YOU THINK? IT'S A GREAT IDEA, HUH?

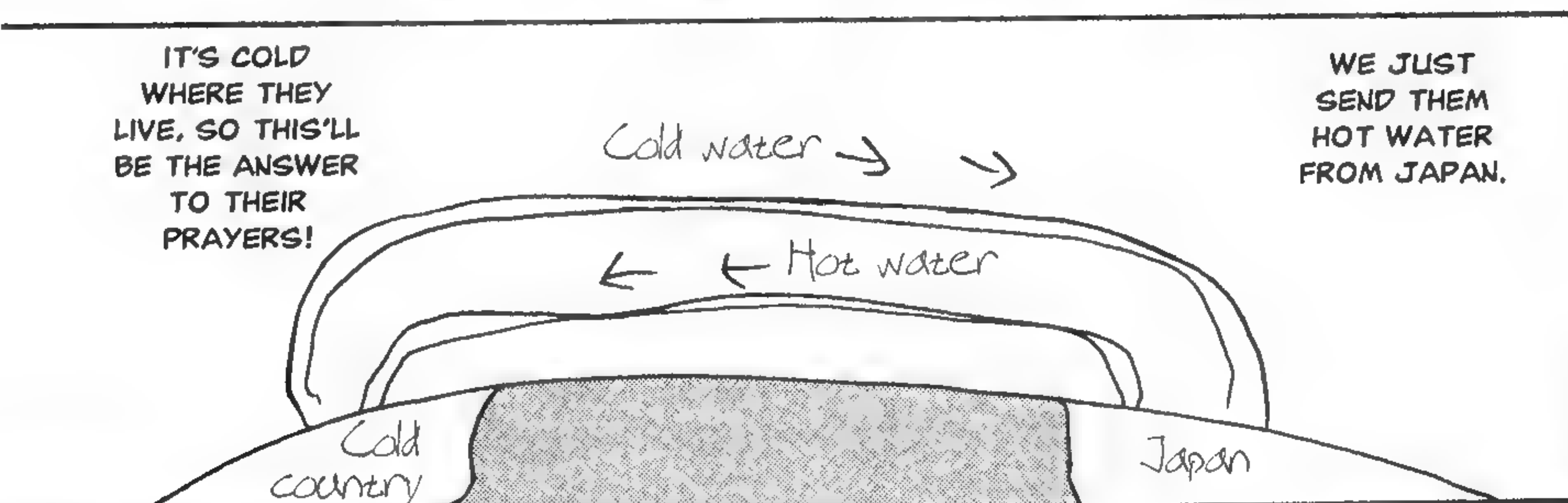


HOT SUMMERS AND HOT SHOWERS? I CAN'T SEE HOW THAT MAKES PEOPLE VERY HAPPY.



WHAT DID I JUST SAY? IT'S SUMMER.

BUT I TURNED THE KNOB TO WHERE IT SHOULD'VE BEEN BARELY WARM. IT WAS BOILING, MAN!



IT'S COLD WHERE THEY LIVE, SO THIS'LL BE THE ANSWER TO THEIR PRAYERS!

WE JUST SEND THEM HOT WATER FROM JAPAN.

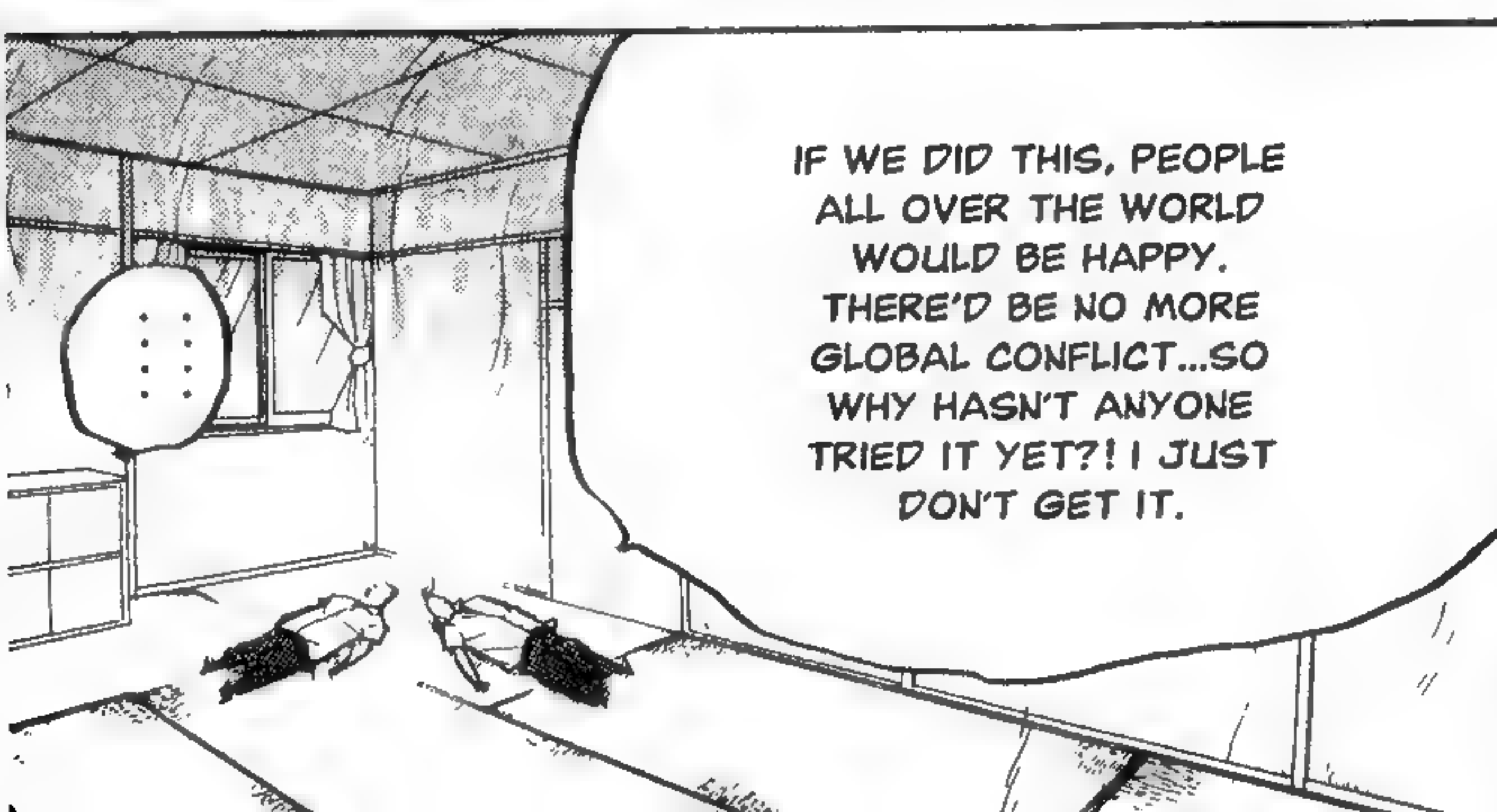


BUT HERE'S THE THING: I'VE COME UP WITH A GREAT IDEA!



LIKE THAT WOULD HAPPEN.

I WISH WE COULD GET THAT HOT WATER TO COME OUT IN WINTER INSTEAD.



IF WE DID THIS, PEOPLE ALL OVER THE WORLD WOULD BE HAPPY. THERE'D BE NO MORE GLOBAL CONFLICT...SO WHY HASN'T ANYONE TRIED IT YET?! I JUST DON'T GET IT.



IT'S LIKE, YOU KNOW, GIVE AND TAKE.

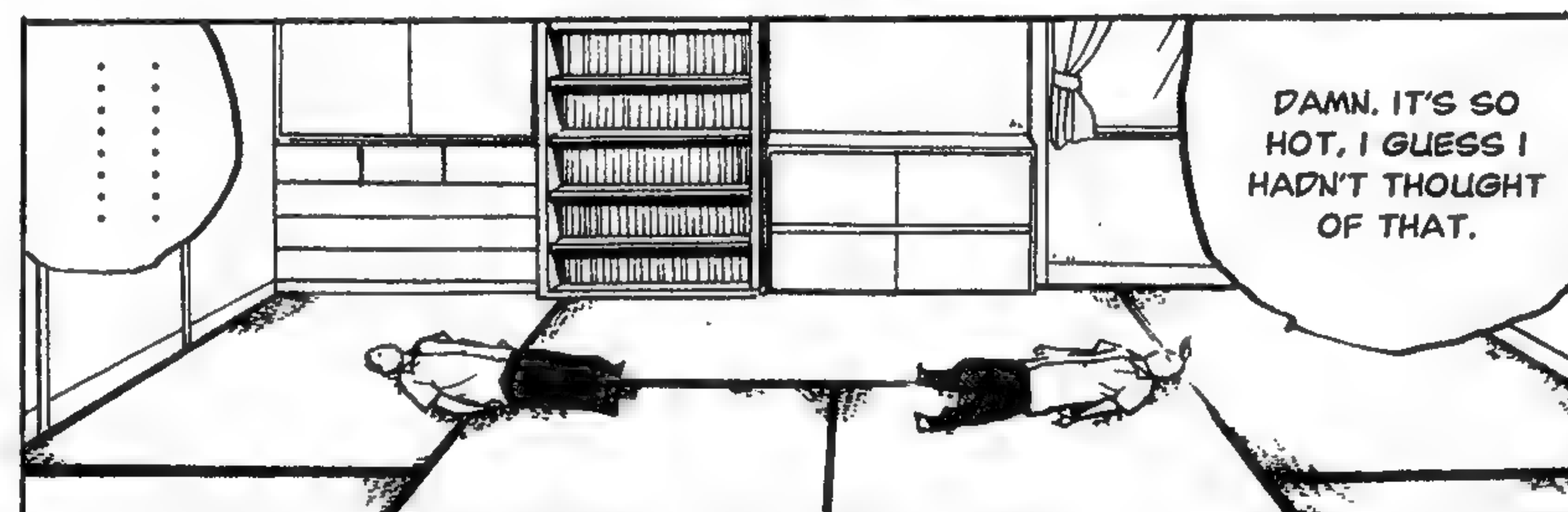
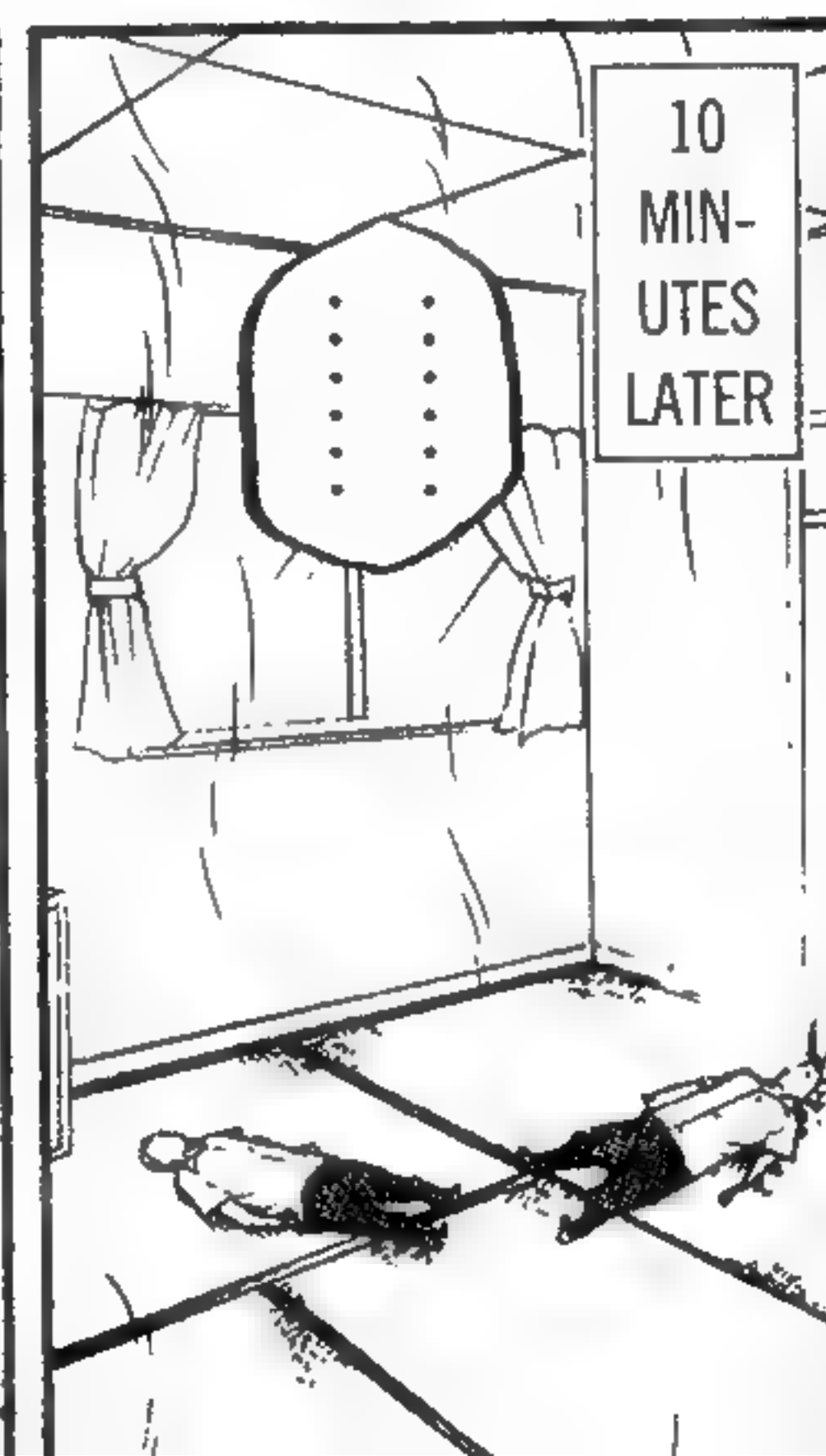
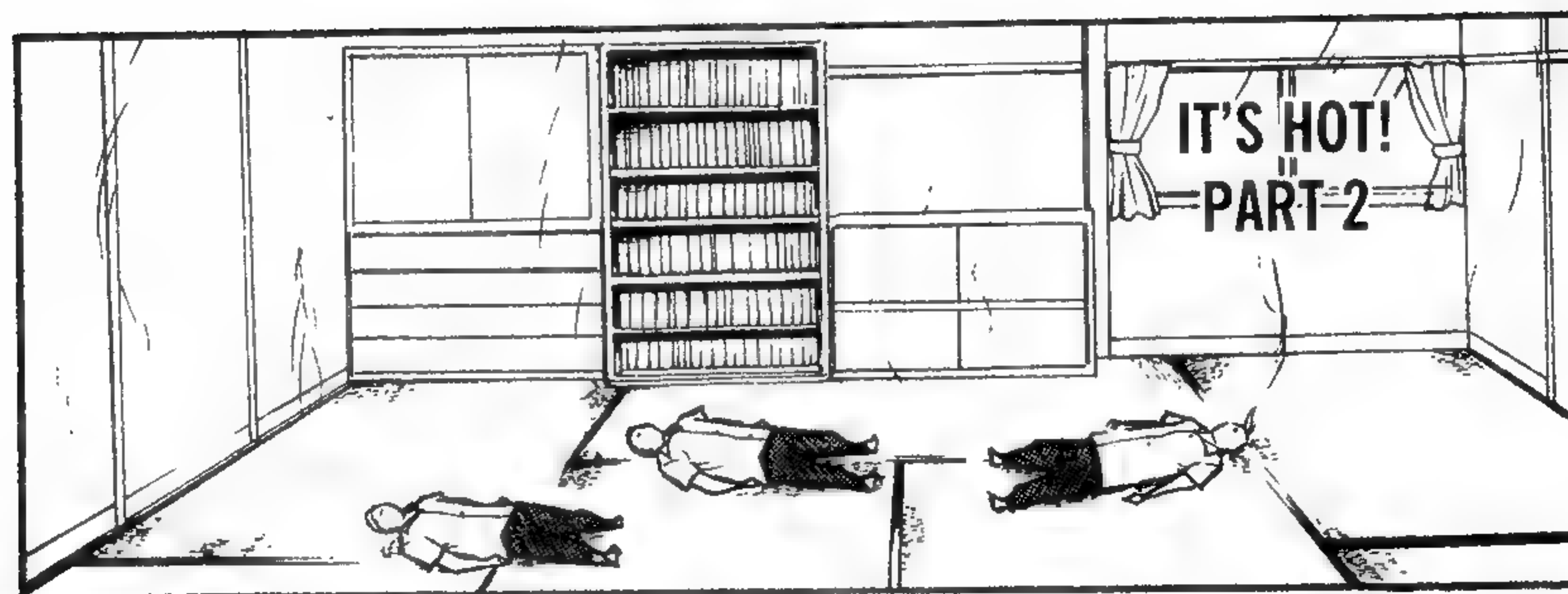


BUT I BET THERE ARE COUNTRIES OUT THERE WHERE IT'S STILL COLD.



RIGHT NOW, JAPAN IS IN WHAT YOU COULD CALL SUMMER HELL...

CHAPTER 242: **HEAT WAVE**



IT REALLY IS HOT.



GOOD.

EVERY-
THING'S
READY,
BOSS.



SORRY.
I DON'T
WANT TO
SOUND LIKE
I'M MAKING
EXCUSES OR
ANYTHING,
BUT...

Y'KNOW,
THIS
COULD
ALMOST
BE CON-
SIDERED
ABUSE.



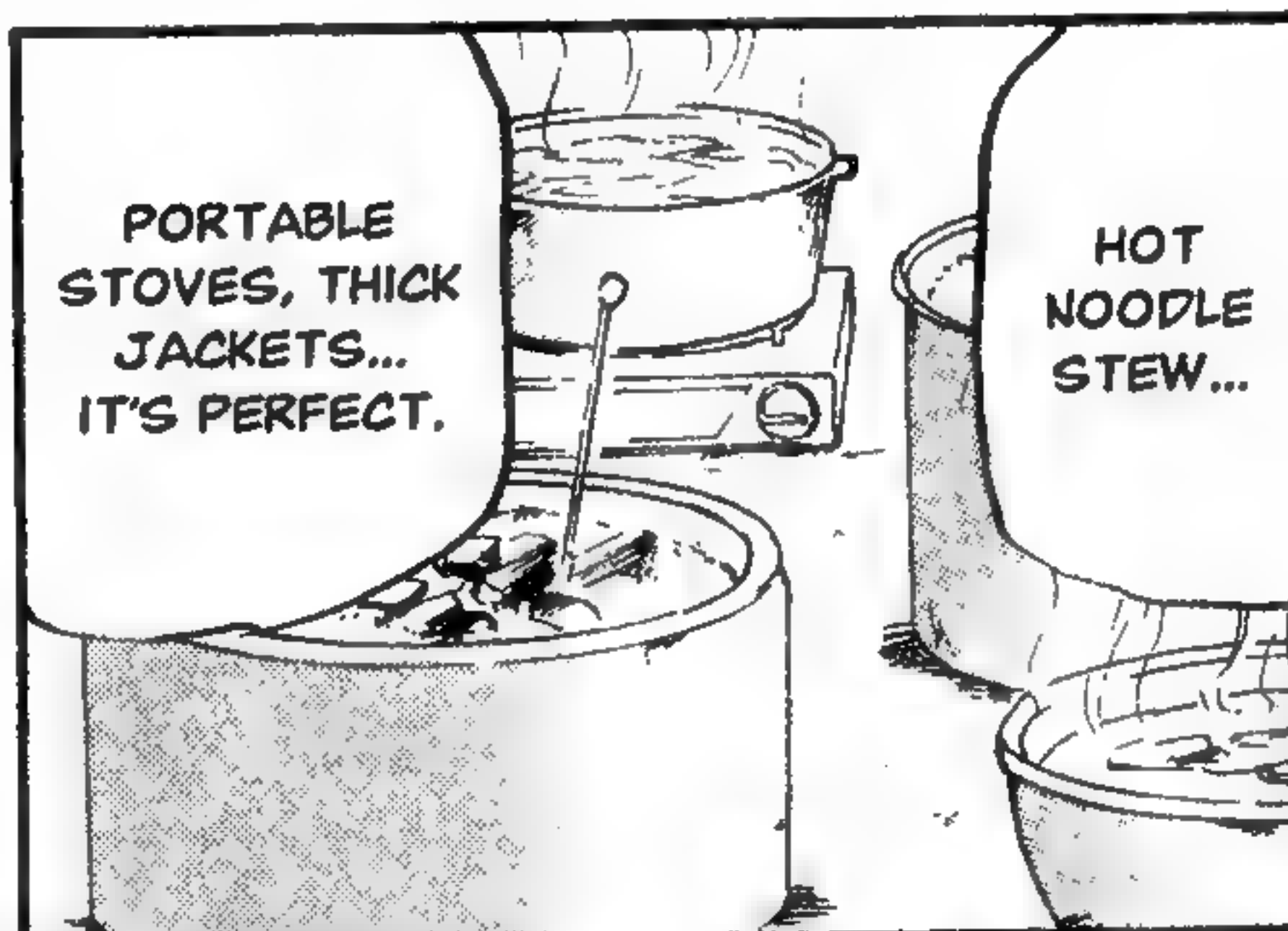
I DON'T
FRICKIN'
BELIEVE IT!

I ACCI-
DENTALLY
BOUGHT HOT
COFFEE.



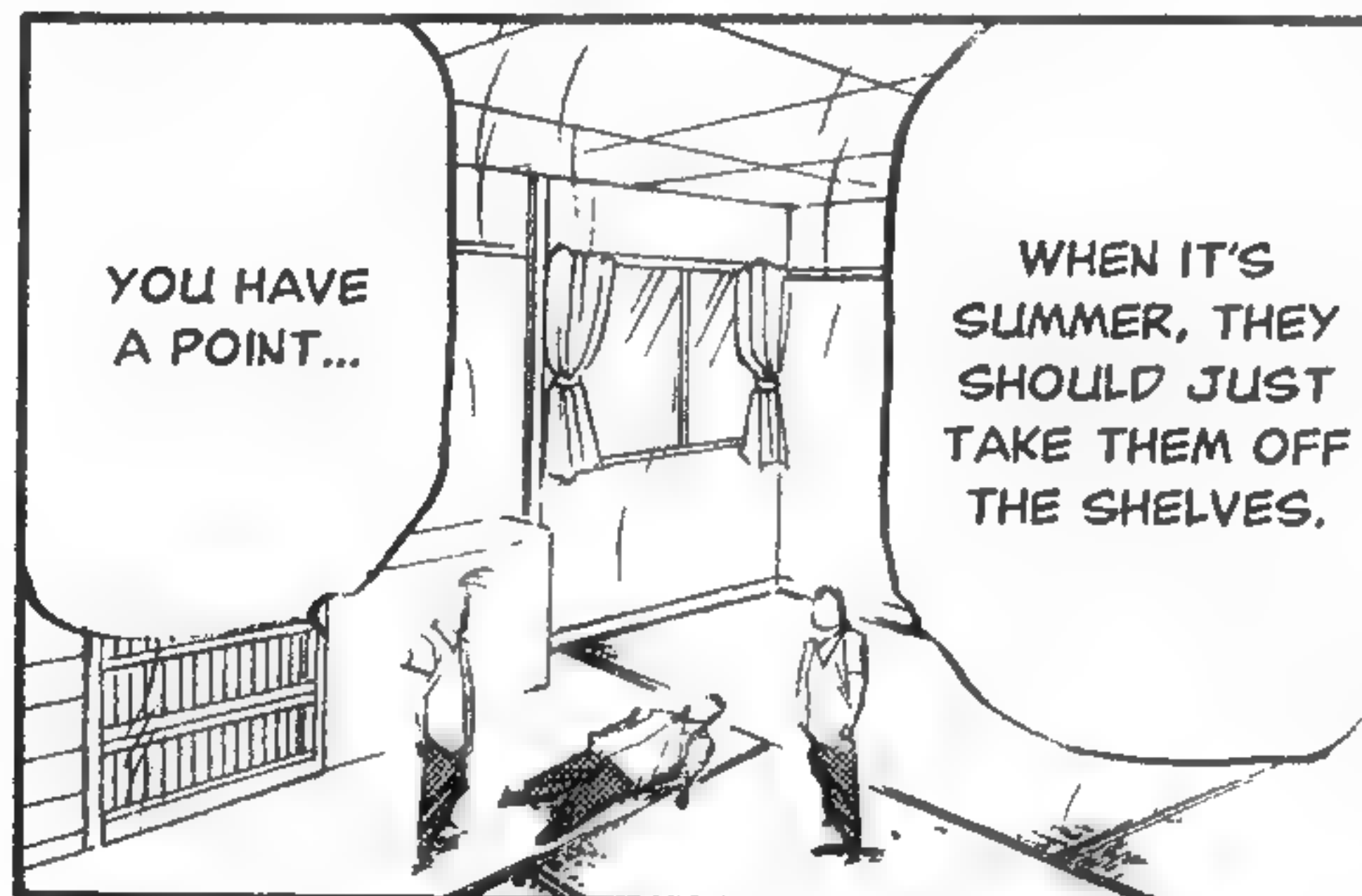
OF COURSE.
I'LL GO GET
THEM RIGHT
AWAY.

ALL WE NEED
NOW ARE THE
HOT DRINKS.
WITHOUT
THOSE, WE
CAN'T GET
THINGS
STARTED.



PORTABLE
STOVES, THICK
JACKETS...
IT'S PERFECT.

HOT
NOODLE
STEW...



YOU HAVE
A POINT...

WHEN IT'S
SUMMER, THEY
SHOULD JUST
TAKE THEM OFF
THE SHELVES.



I DON'T THINK
IT'S RIGHT TO
HAVE HOT DRINKS
FOR SALE IN
THE MIDDLE OF
SUMMER.



WHAT?!

IT LOOKS LIKE
AS OF THIS
YEAR, THEY'VE
STOPPED
SELLING HOT
DRINKS IN
SUMMER!

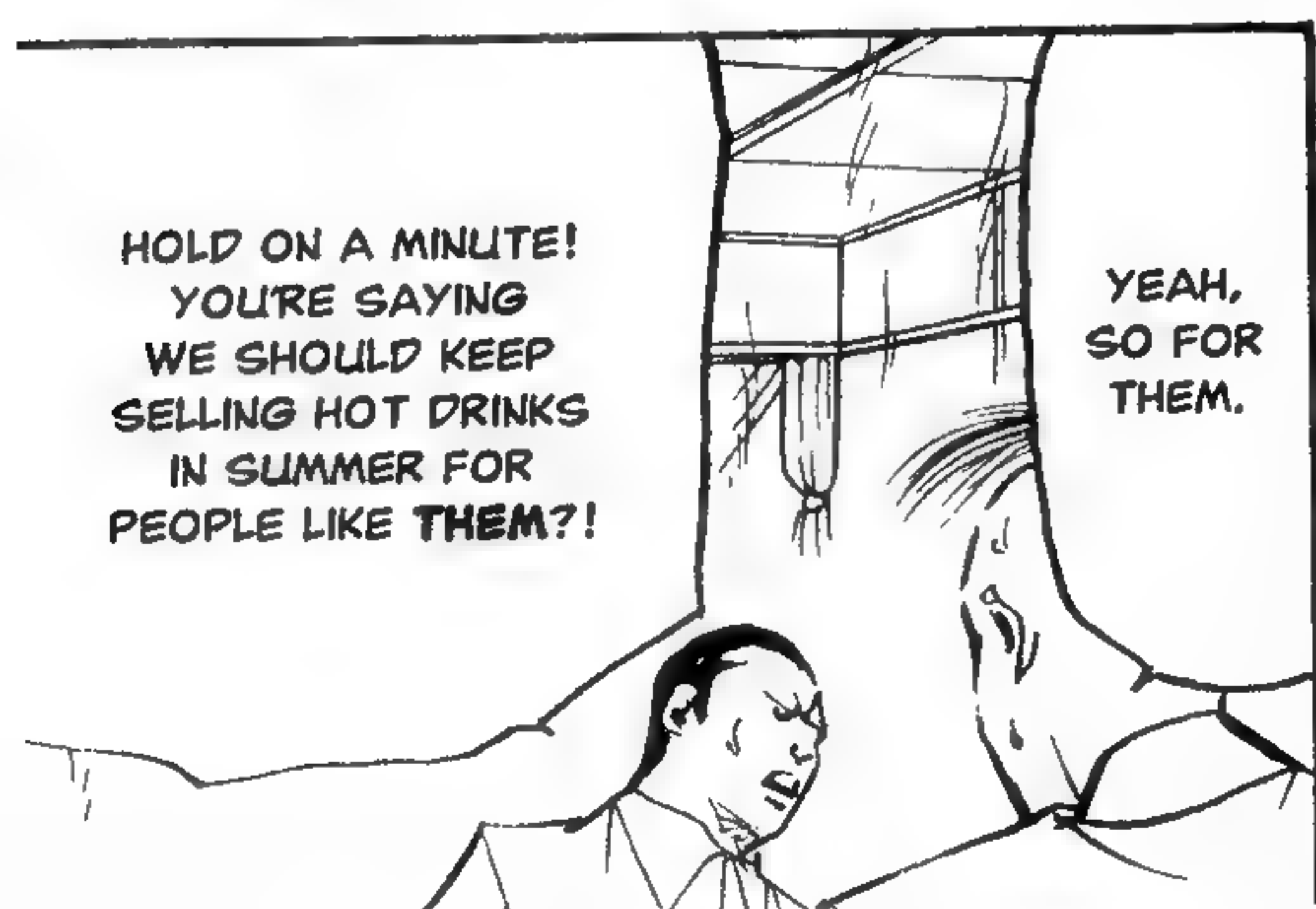


WHAT
IS IT?

BOSS!
TERRIBLE
NEWS!



BUT THERE
ARE PEOPLE
OUT THERE
WHO LIKE THEIR
BEVERAGES HOT,
EVEN IN SUMMER.



HOLD ON A MINUTE!
YOU'RE SAYING
WE SHOULD KEEP
SELLING HOT DRINKS
IN SUMMER FOR
PEOPLE LIKE THEM?!

YEAH,
SO FOR
THEM.



BUT WE'VE
DONE THIS
ENDURANCE
CHALLENGE II
TIMES ALREADY!
WHAT ABOUT
OUR LONG
AND PROUD
TRADITION?!

THEN
THIS HAS
ALL BEEN
FOR
NOTHING!



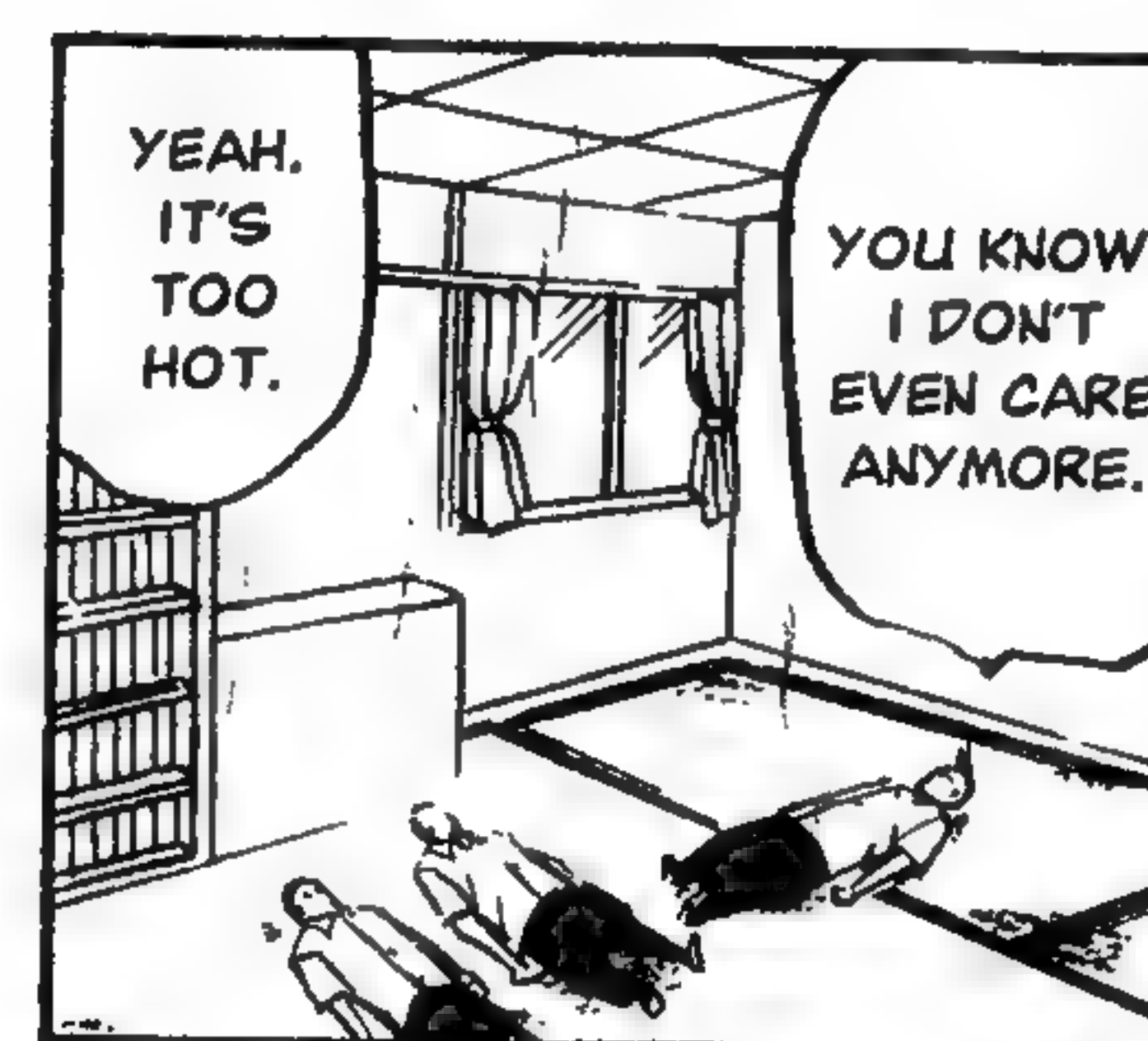
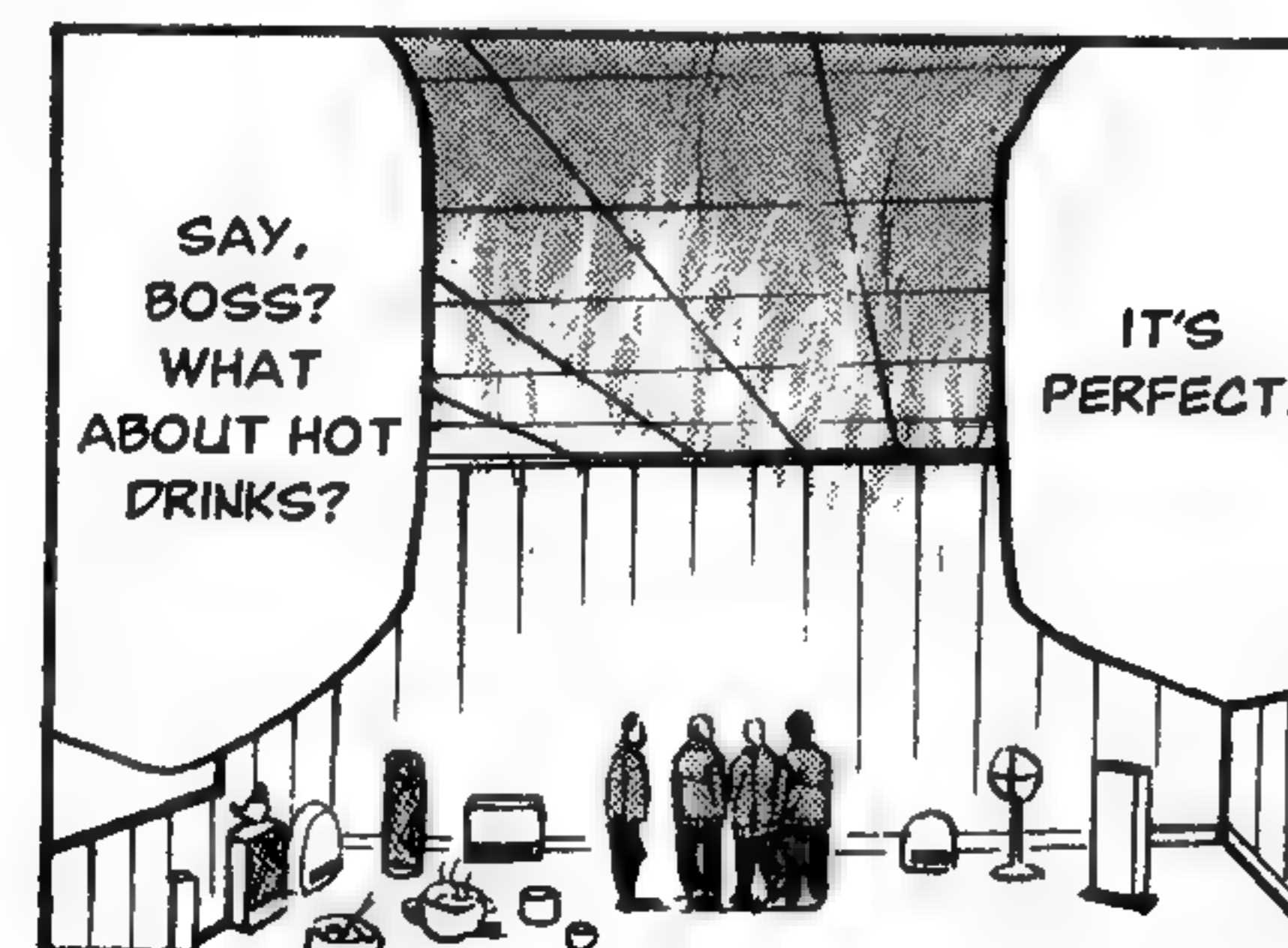
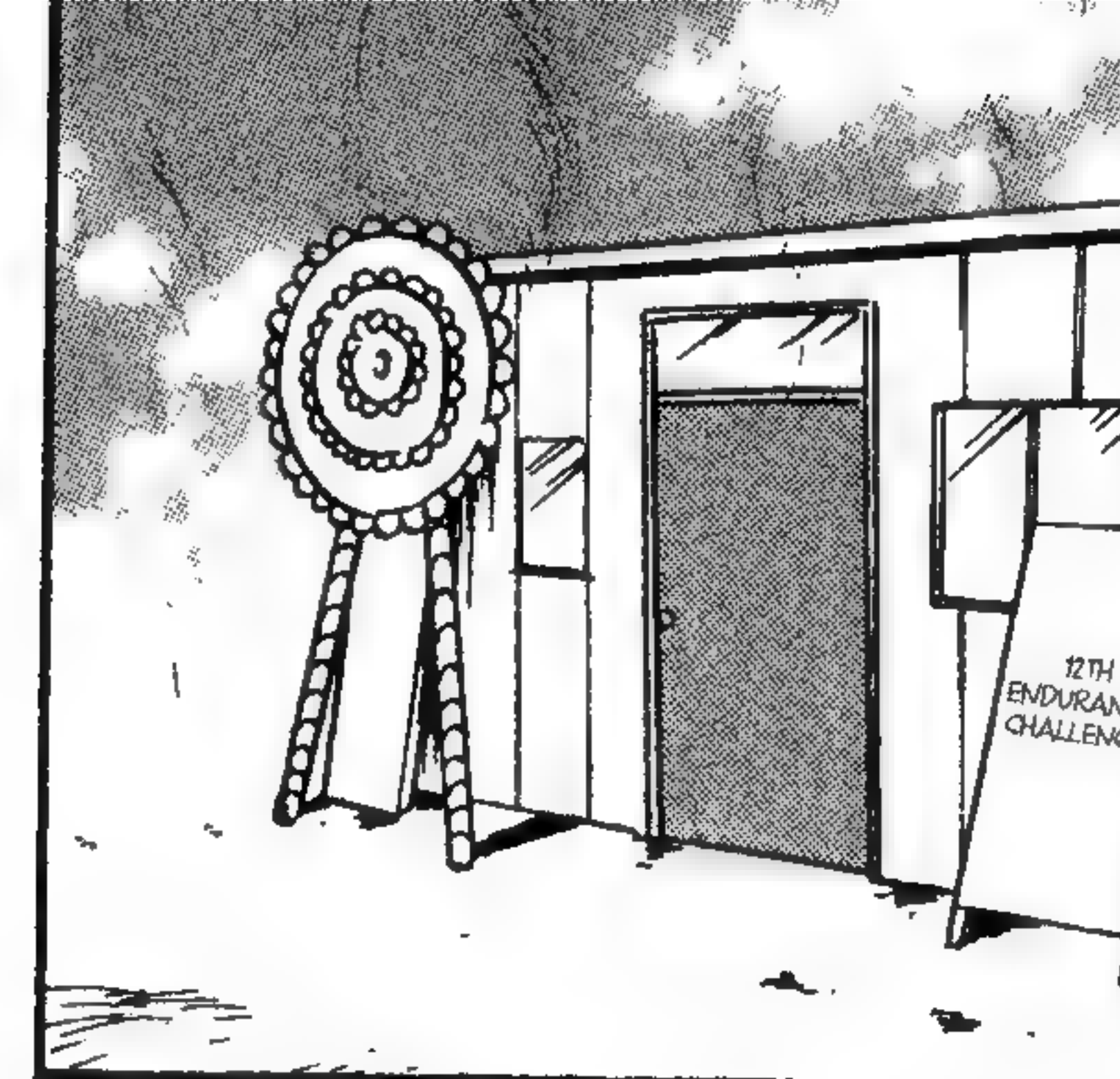
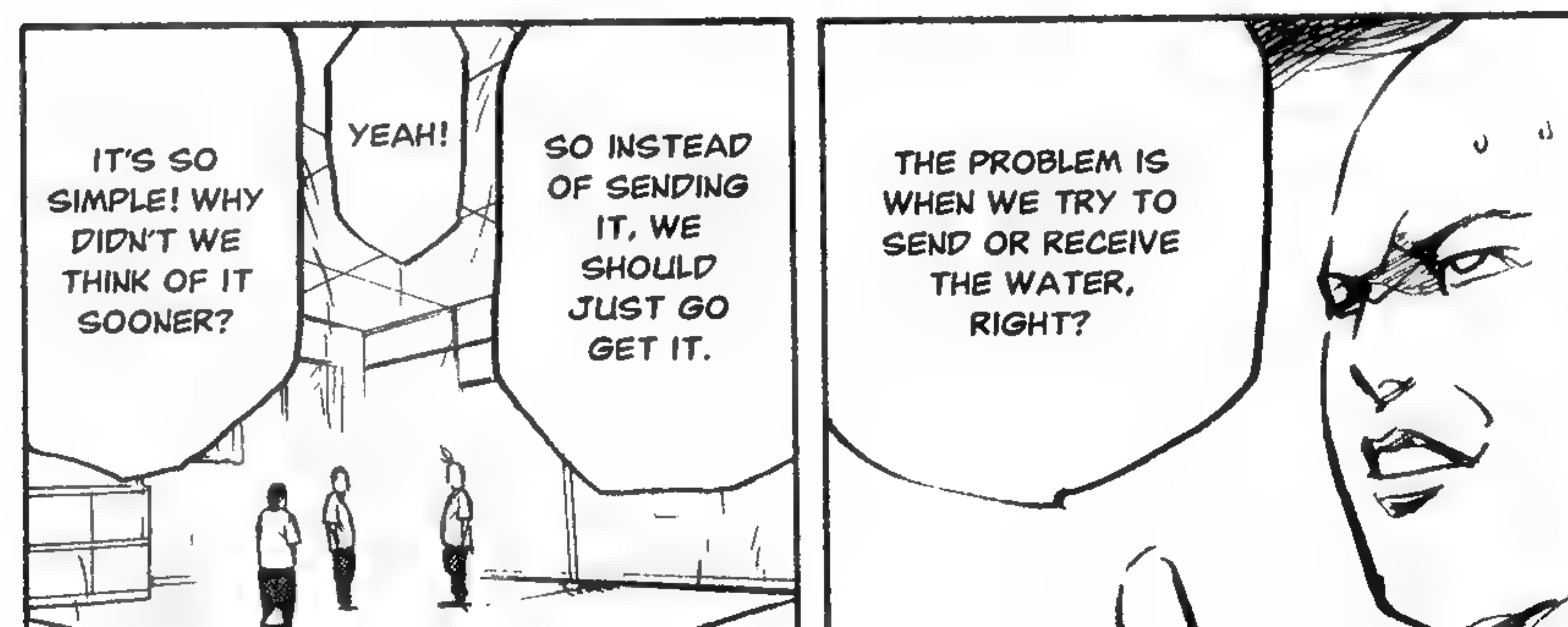
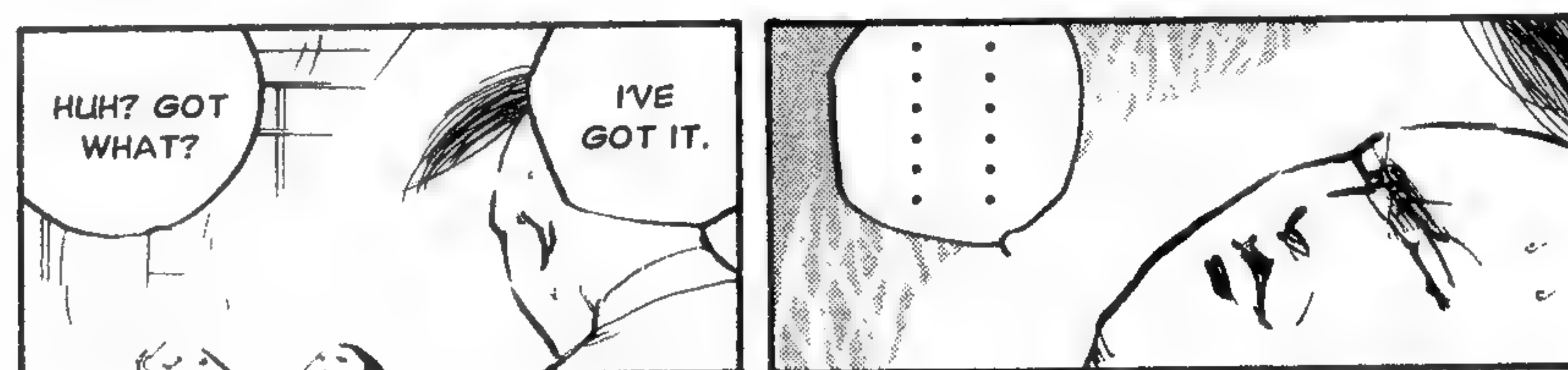
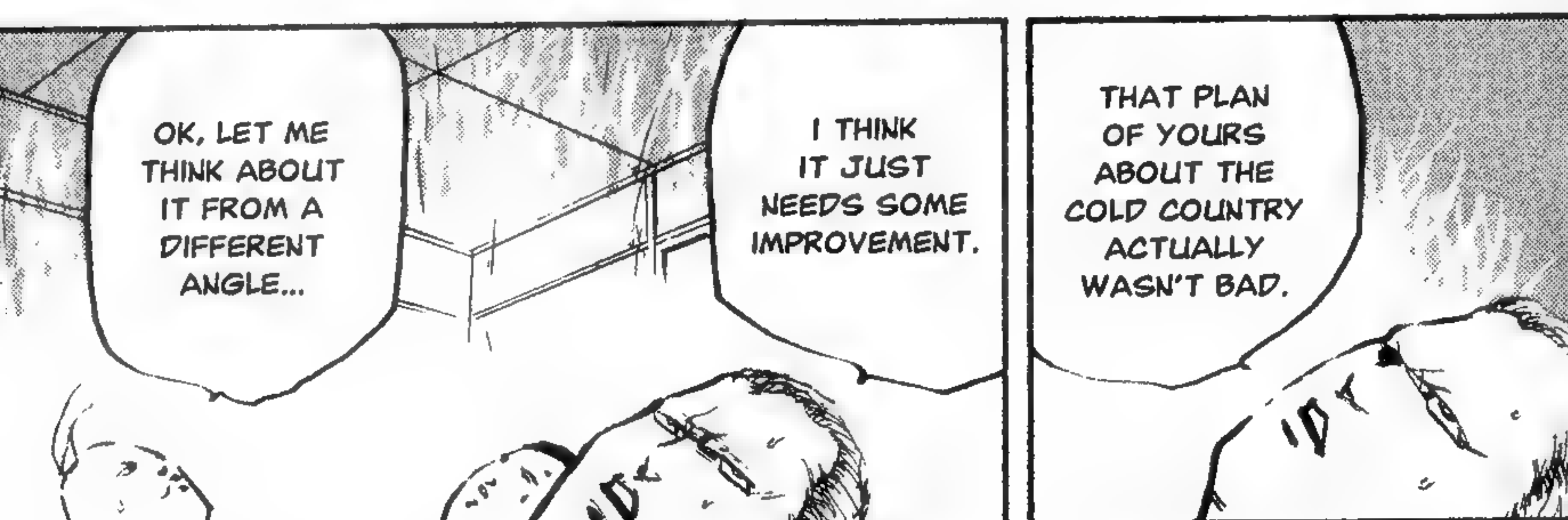
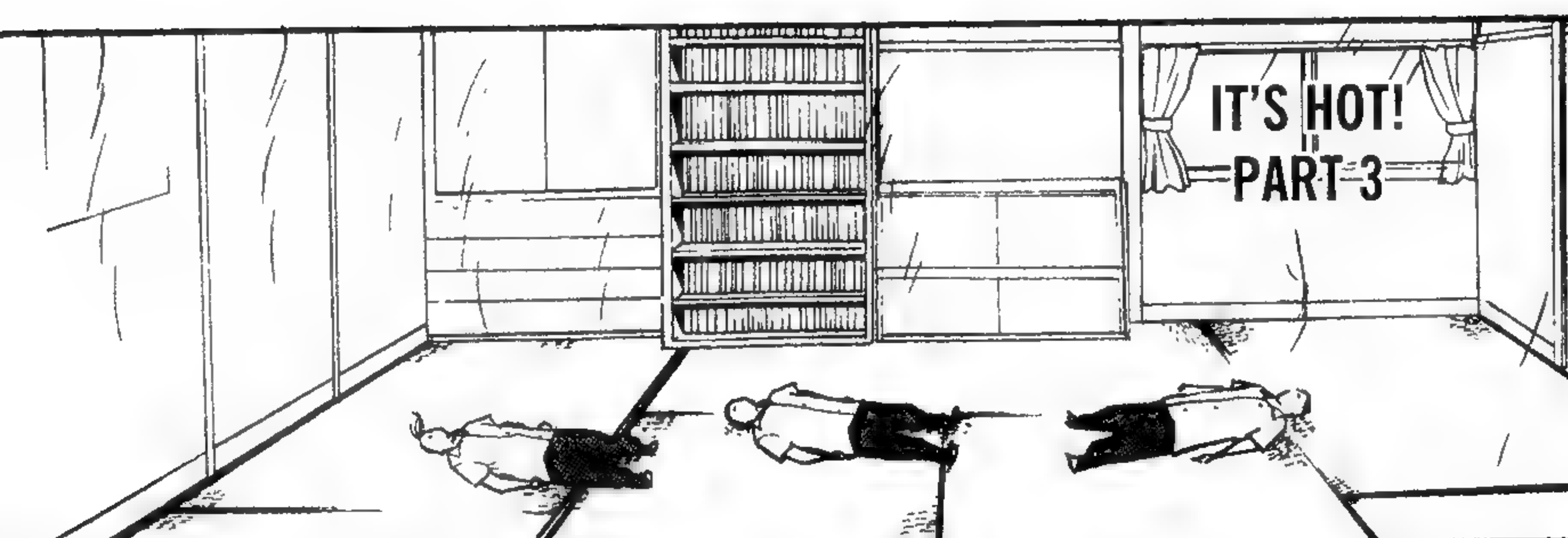
YES,
THERE ARE!



HUH?! ARE
THERE
REALLY
PEOPLE LIKE
THAT?

YOU HAVE
TO THINK OF
THEM, TOO.

CHAPTER 243: COOL UNDER HEAT



HE WAS CLOSE.



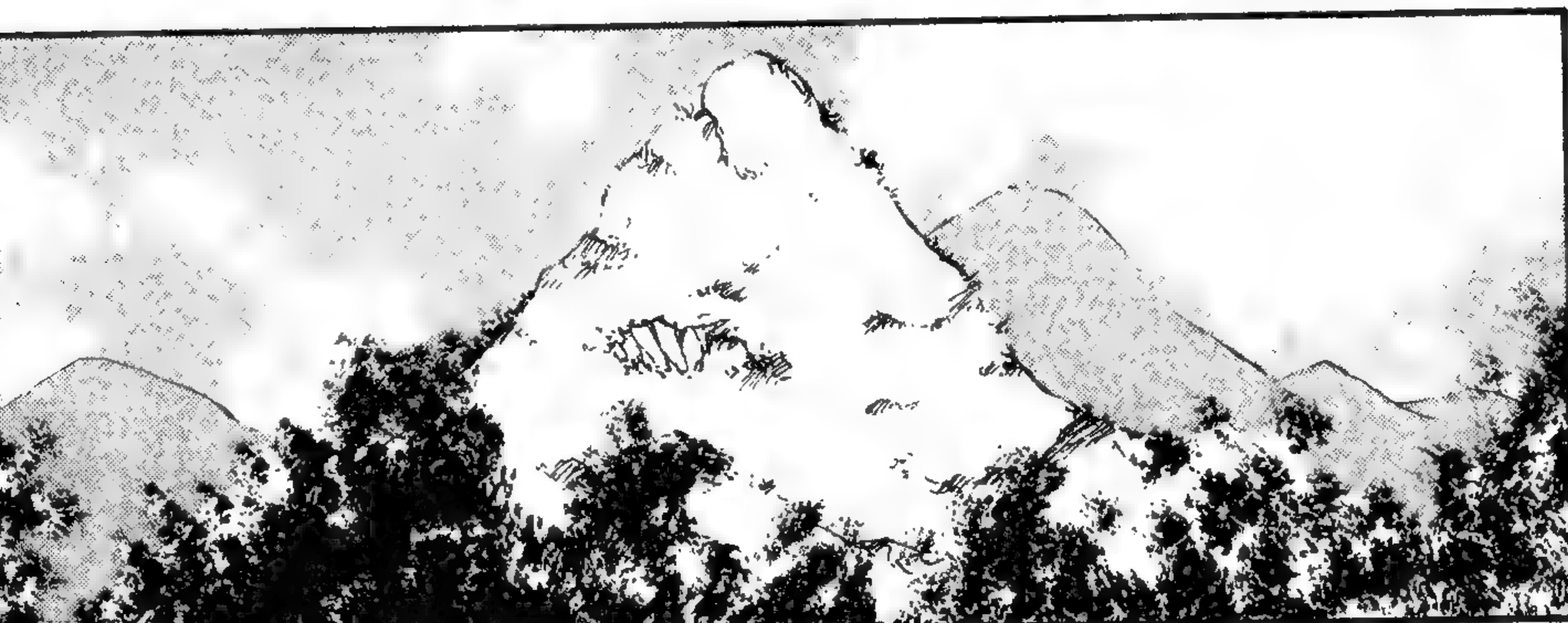
YEAH.

DON'T
GIVE UP.
WE'RE
ALMOST
THERE.

PROBABLY
BECAUSE
THE AIR
PRESSURE'S
SO LOW.



IT'S
GETTING
A LITTLE
HARD TO
BREATHE.



YES!
COLD
COUN-
TRY!

WE'RE
FINALLY
HERE!



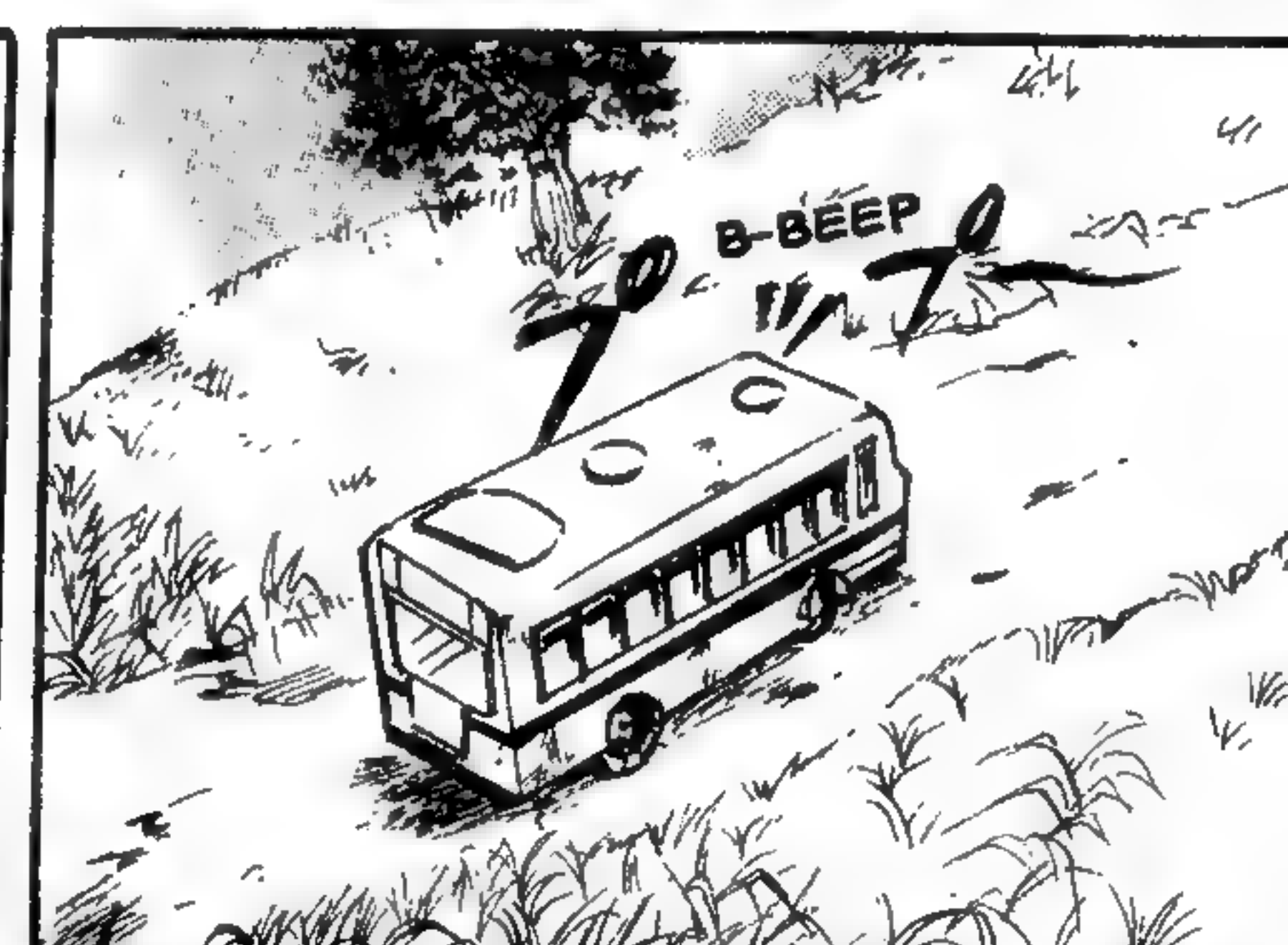
GOOD
IDEA.

ANYWAY,
WE'RE ALL
TIRED, SO WE
SHOULD REST
FOR A BIT.

I JUST
DIDN'T
THINK IT'D
BE SO
COLD!

I WISH I'D
BROUGHT A
JACKET.

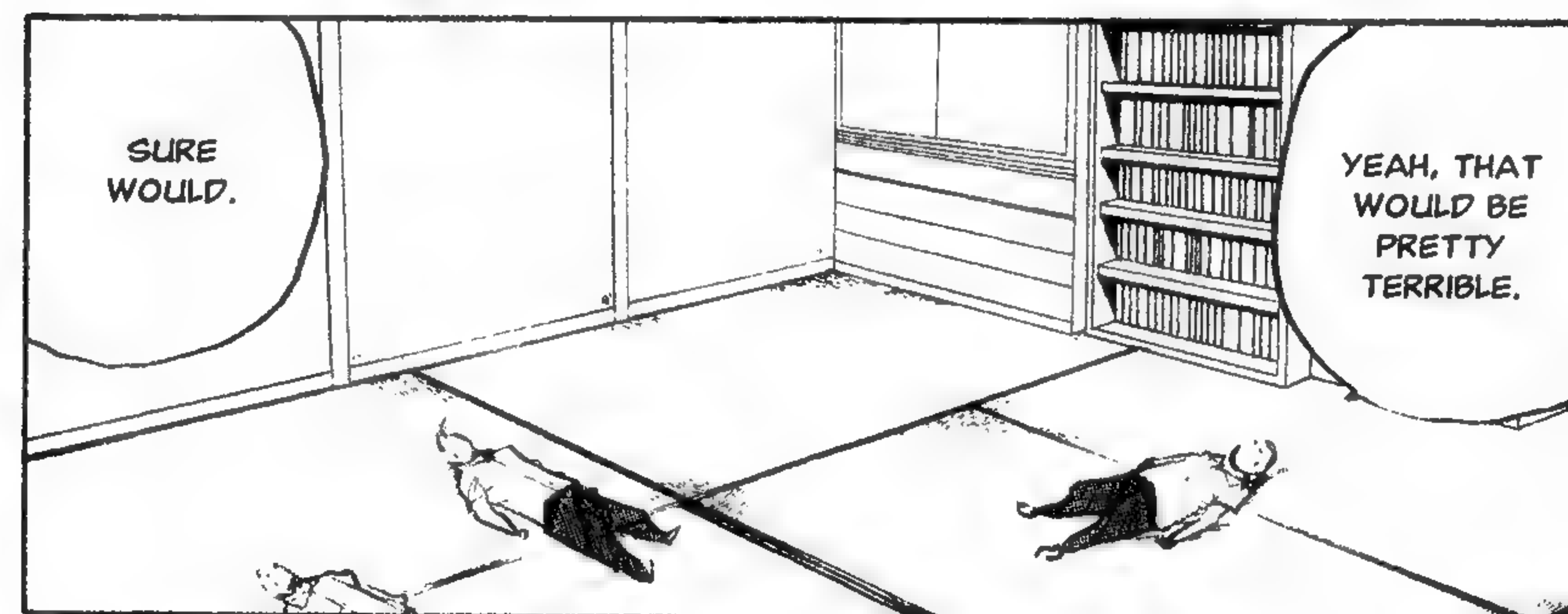
IT SURE
IS COLD...
IT'S GETTING
PRETTY UNCOM-
FORTABLE.



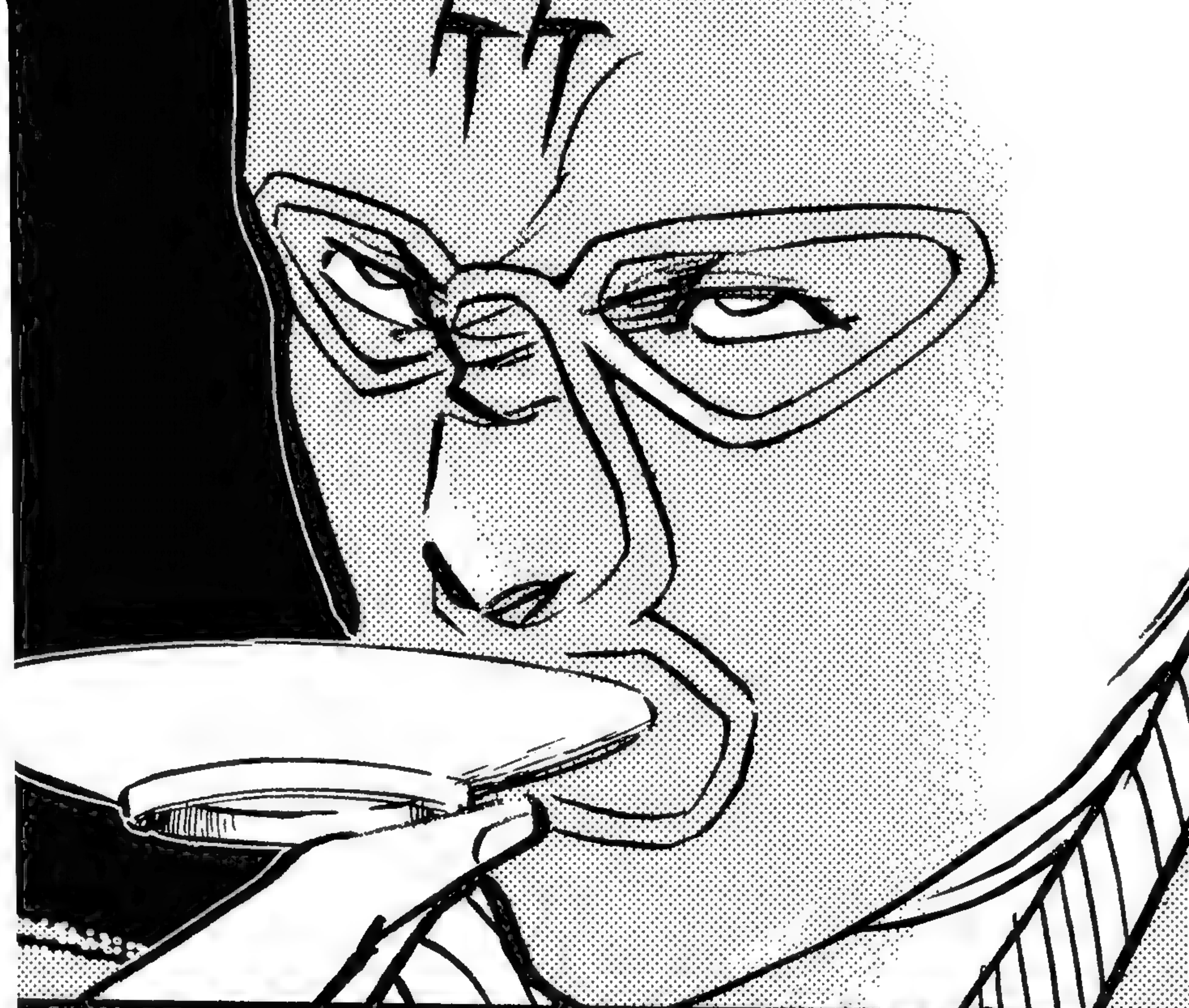
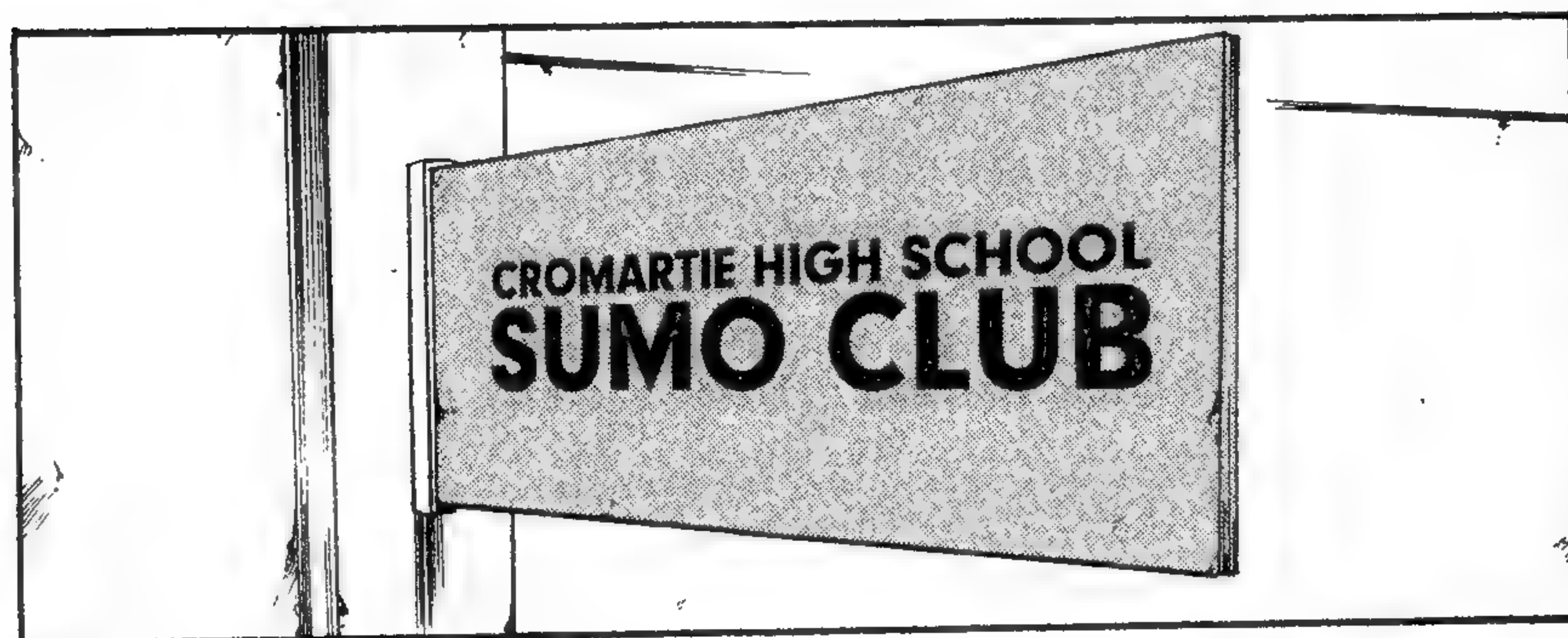
CHARACTER INTRODUCTION

I get the feeling this sort of thing really isn't necessary anymore, but just in case there are any people out there reading *Cromartie High School* for the first time (though I don't think there are), here it is—your introduction to the characters. First up is, like it says, Maeda's mom. Her face looks exactly like her son's. Which is scary. Like Freddie and the Gorilla, she's not one for words, but she's quite a hard worker. In this volume, we finally see that she has a part-time job. She's not exactly a regular character, but she's extremely important because she tends to show up to suddenly deliver a gag, so you should remember who she is. Fine, then who's this 'Maeda?' some of you may be asking. But you don't have to worry about remembering him. (LOL)

MAEDA'S MOM



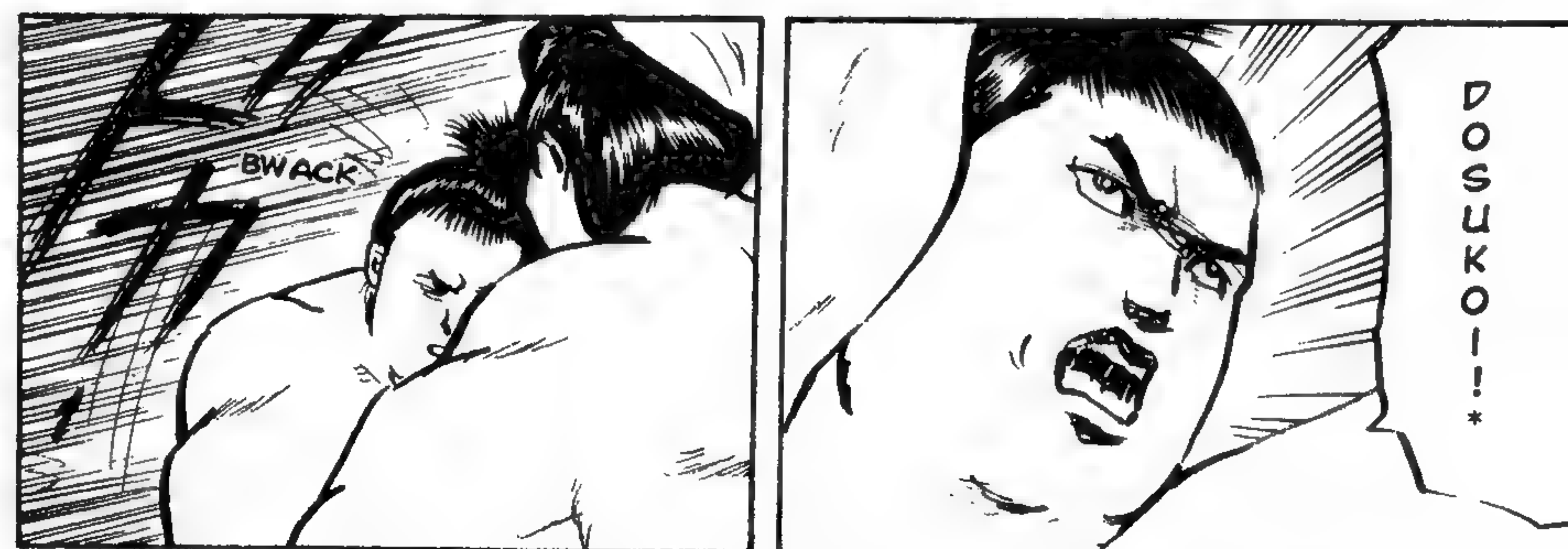
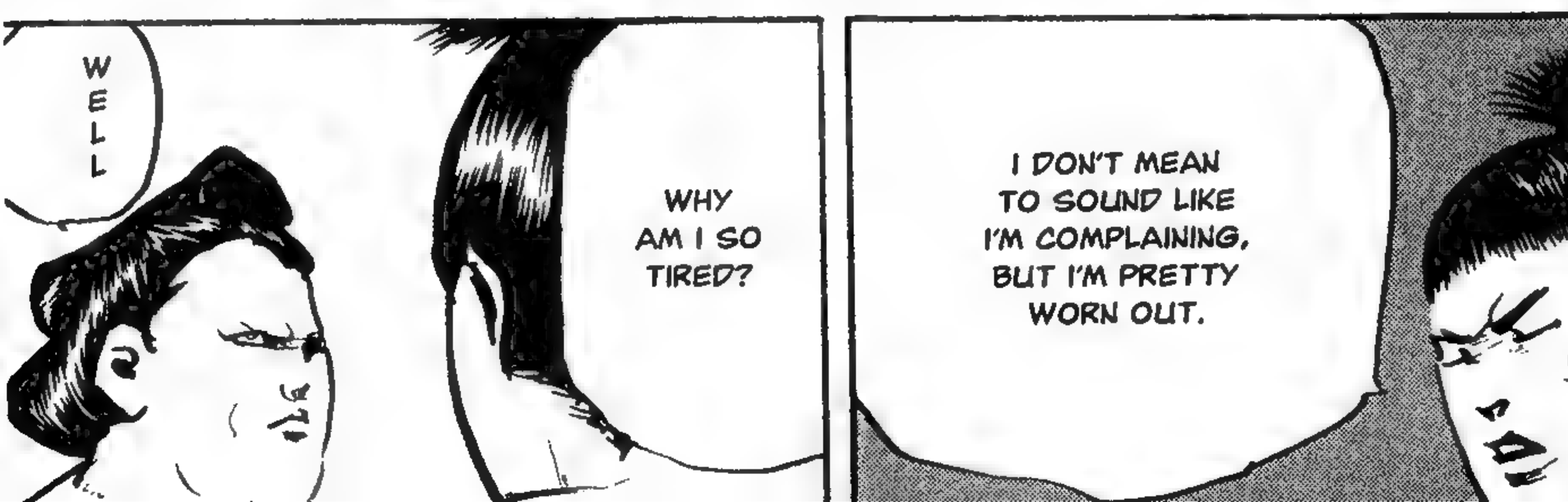
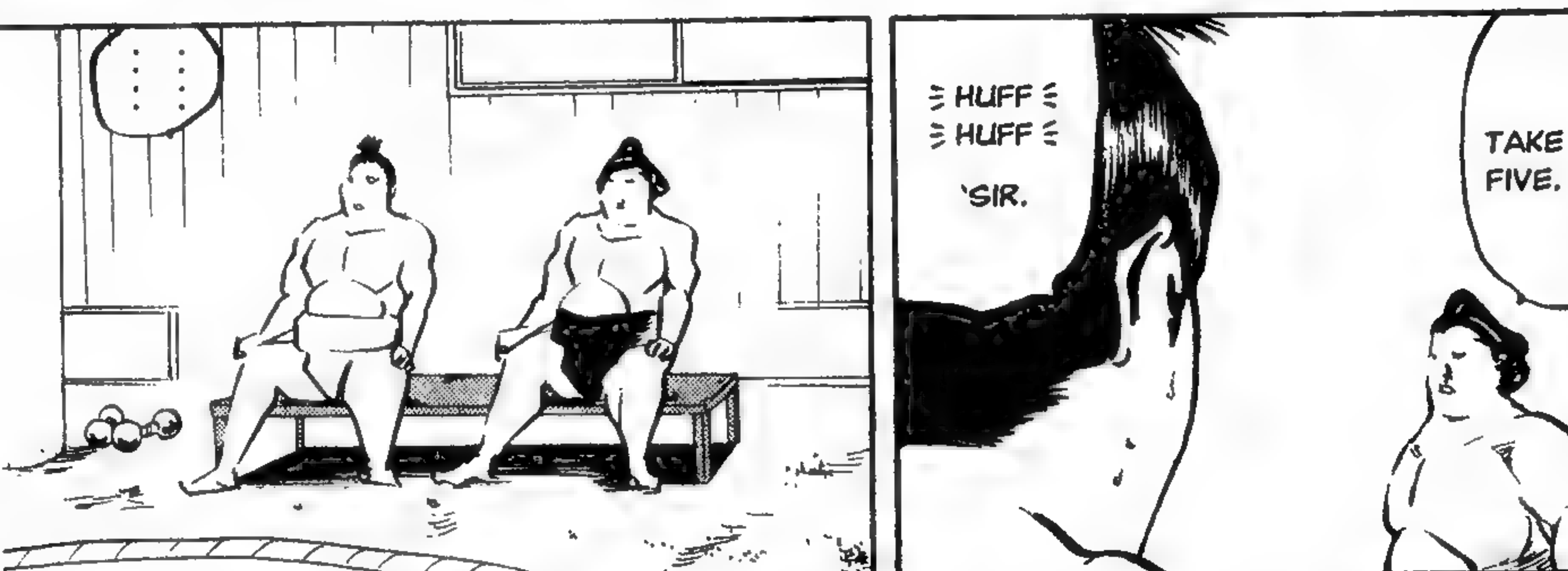
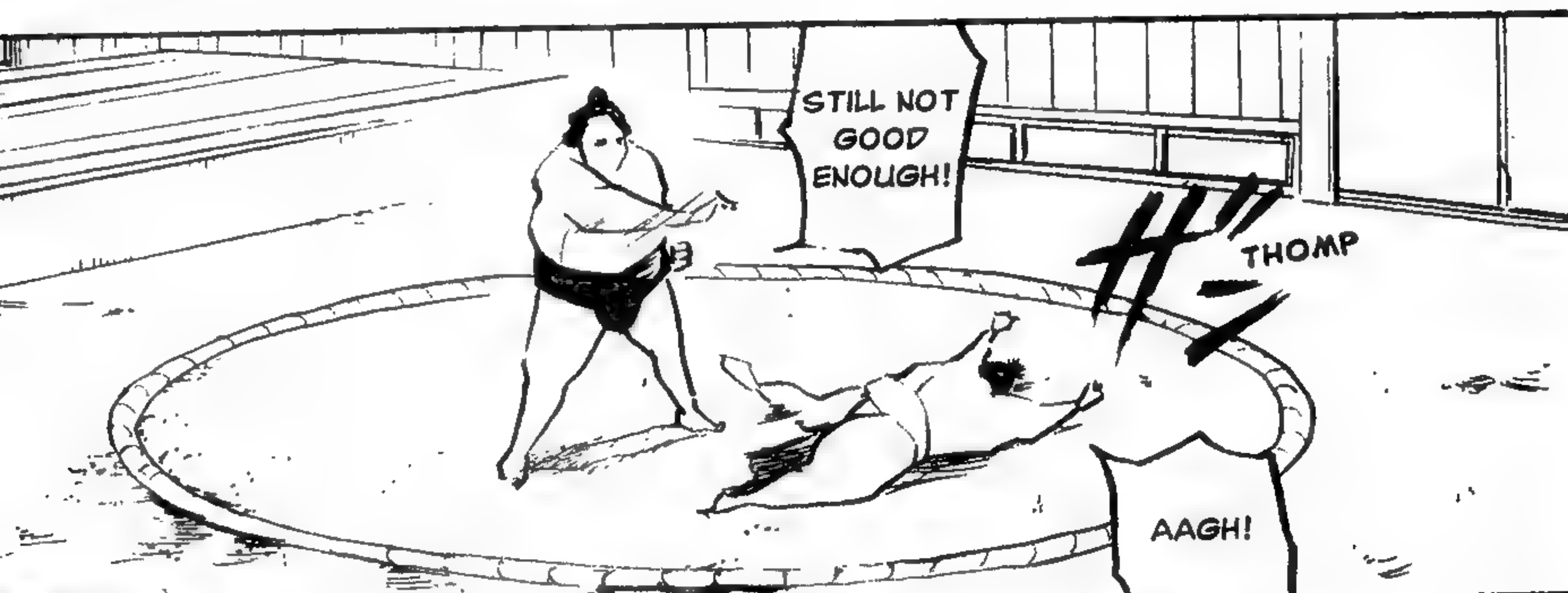
I DON'T THINK THERE'S SUCH A PLACE AS "COLD COUNTRY."



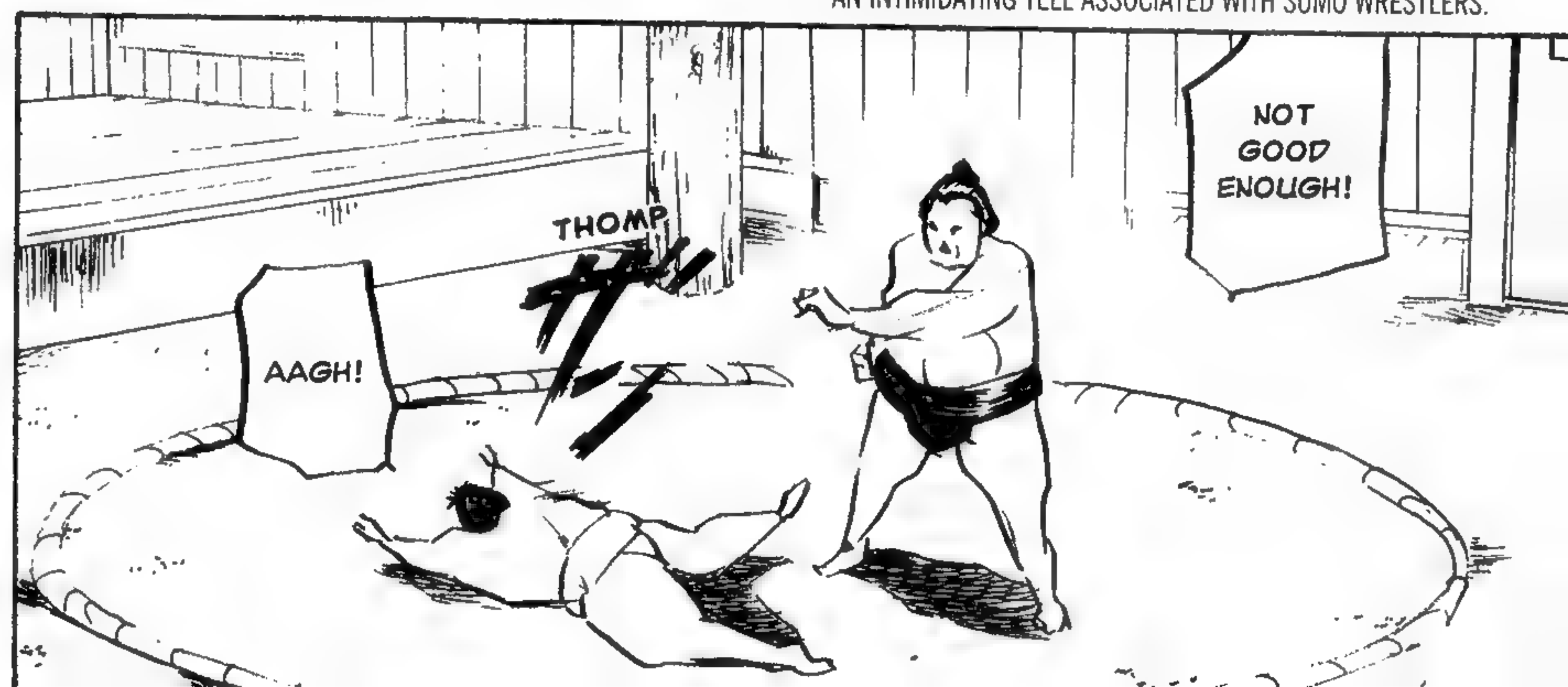
MASKED TAKENOUCHI

I'm introducing this character here so any first-time *Cromartie* readers won't get all surprised and start exclaiming, "That student wears a mask!" This individual was originally a hijacker, but following a failed attempt to hijack a plane carrying the students of Cromartie High, he attempted to pass himself off as Takenouchi (the unofficial boss of Cromartie High) by writing part of Takenouchi's name on his mask. This, naturally, was enough for the students of Cromartie to scarcely give it a second thought. Also, no one teases him about the mask (though there is the occasional reference, which is always good for a laugh). Incidentally, I forgot most of this backstory myself, so writing it again here was a good thing.

CHARACTER
INTRODUCTION



*AN INTIMIDATING YELL ASSOCIATED WITH SUMO WRESTLERS.





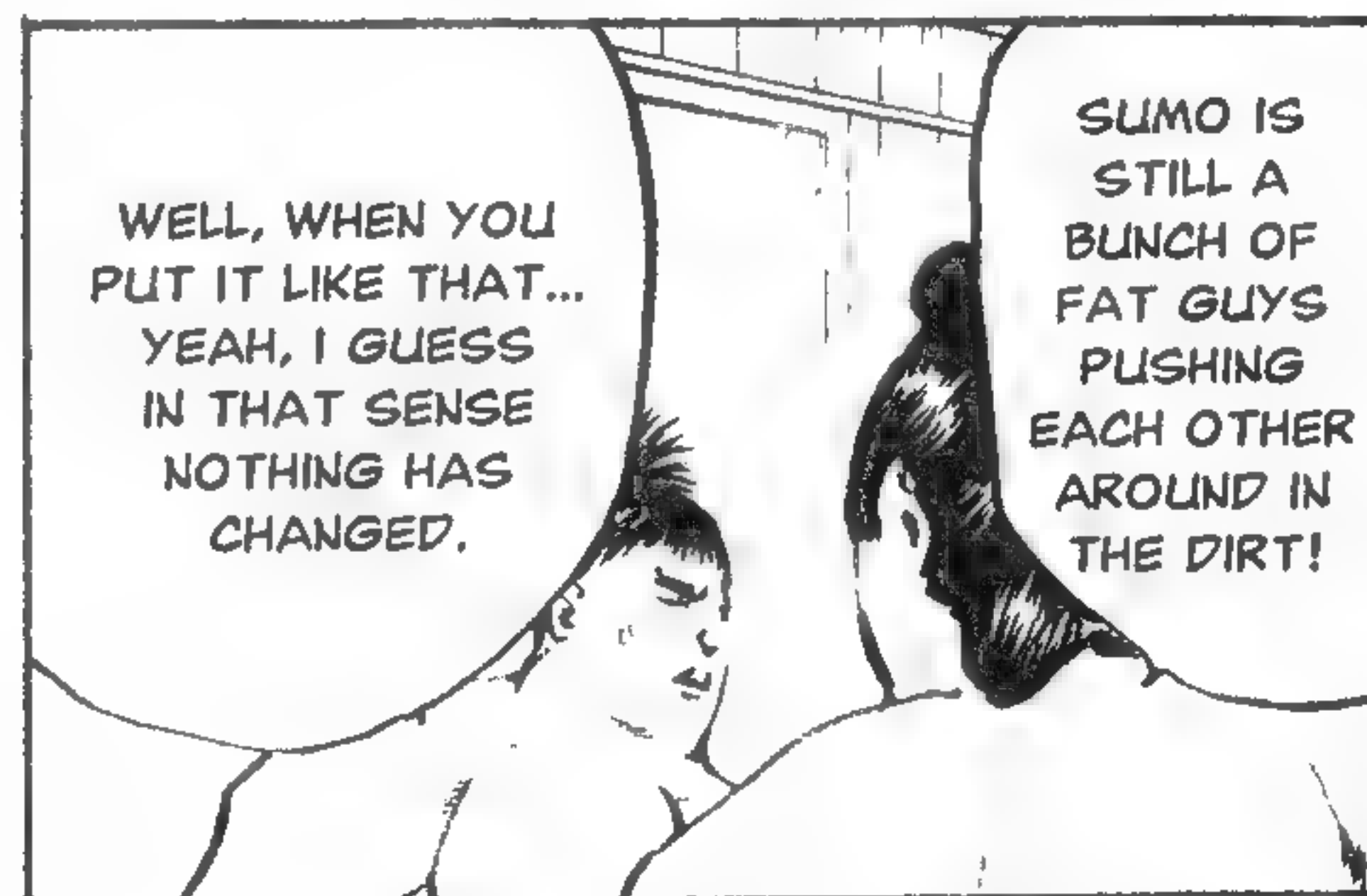
IDIOT! THEY'VE GOT NOTHING TO DO WITH IT!

SUMO WAS POPULAR WHEN THEY WERE STILL AROUND.



I THINK WAKANOHANA AND TAKANOHANA* RETIRING REALLY HURT THE SUMO WORLD.

* SIBLING SUMO WRESTLERS FAMOUS FOR THEIR TECHNIQUE AND RAPID RISE THROUGH THE RANKS

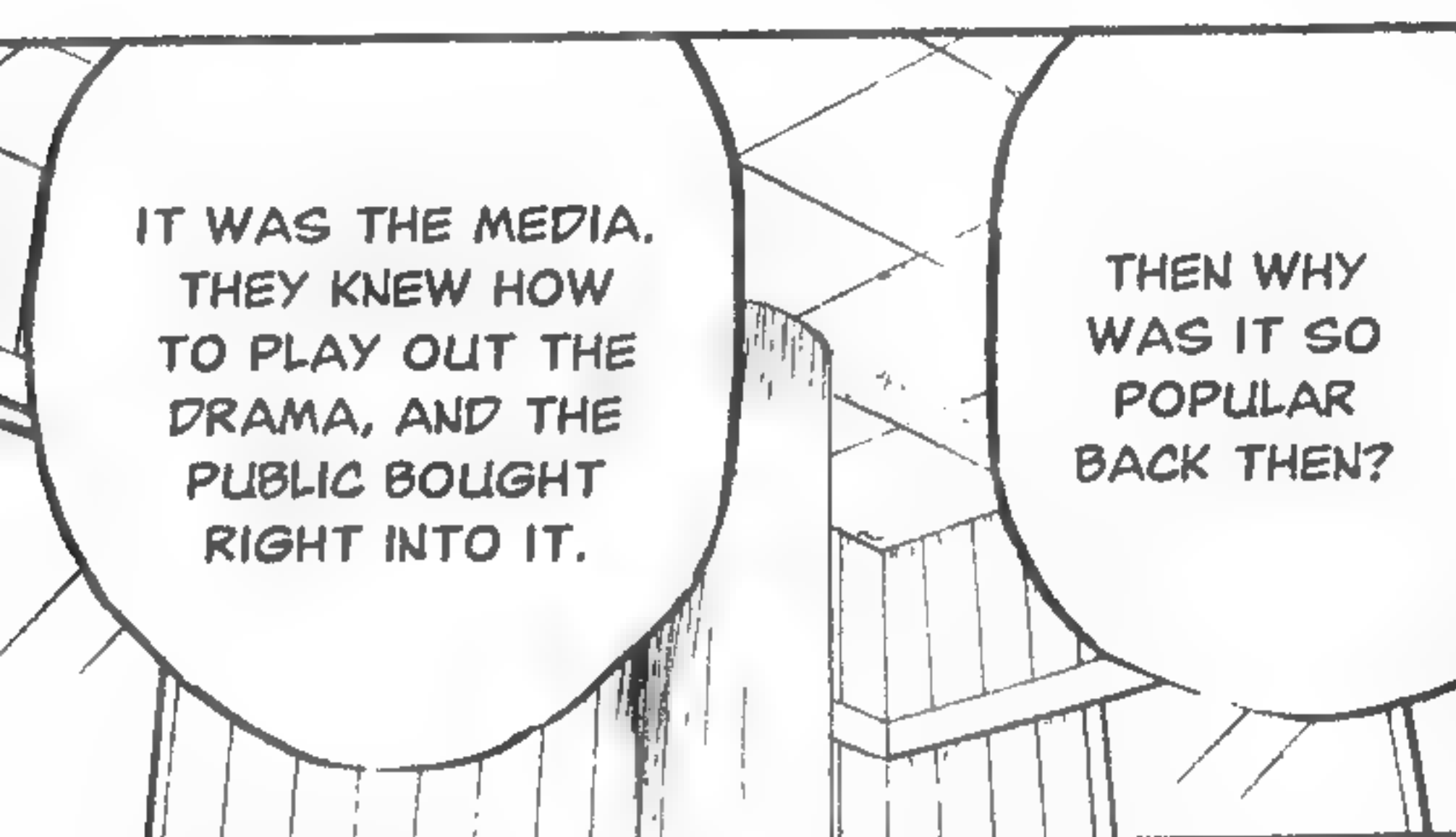


WELL, WHEN YOU PUT IT LIKE THAT... YEAH, I GUESS IN THAT SENSE NOTHING HAS CHANGED.

SUMO IS STILL A BUNCH OF FAT GUYS PUSHING EACH OTHER AROUND IN THE DIRT!

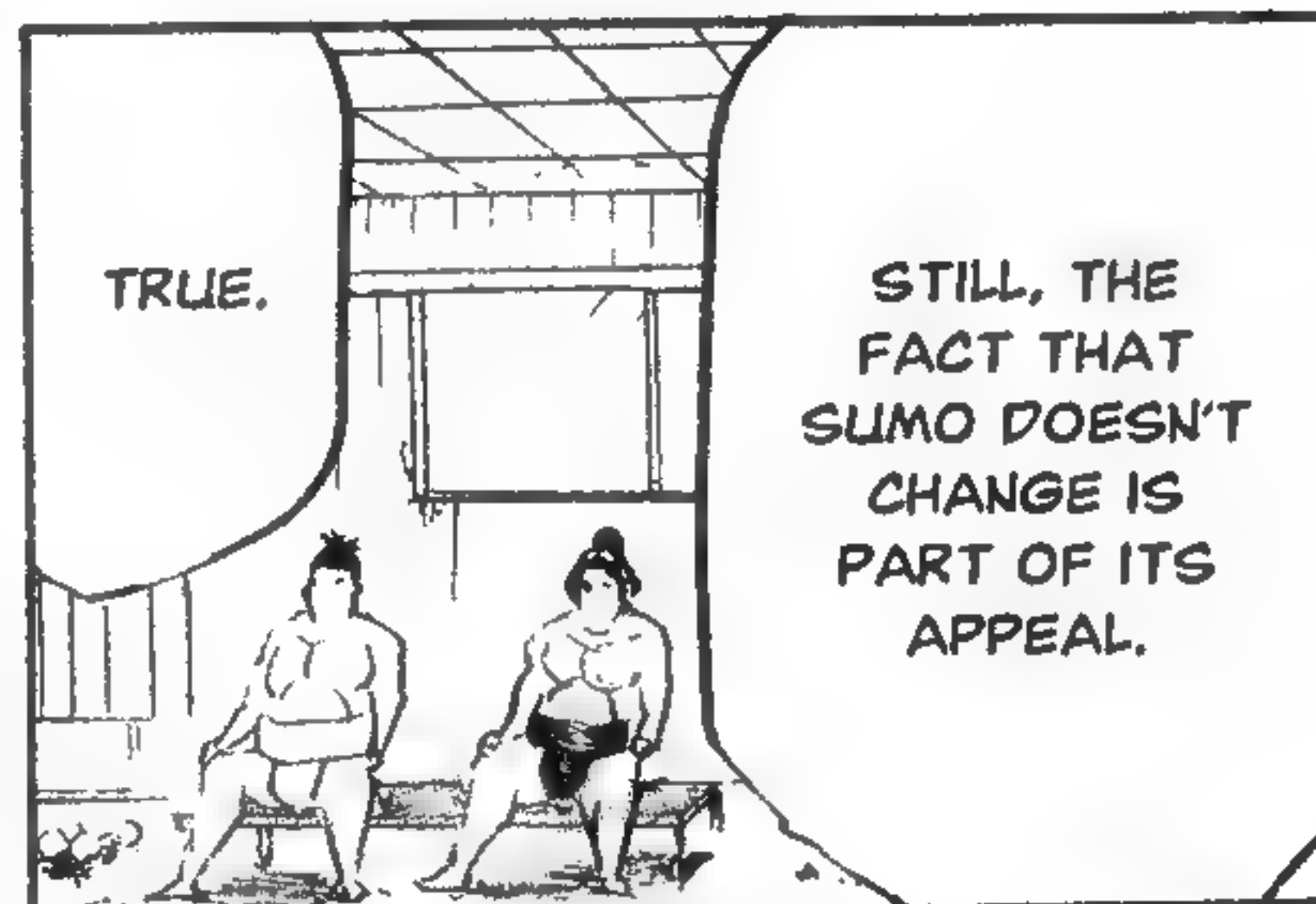


IT'S NOT LIKE ANYTHING HAS CHANGED SINCE THEN!



IT WAS THE MEDIA. THEY KNEW HOW TO PLAY OUT THE DRAMA, AND THE PUBLIC BOUGHT RIGHT INTO IT.

THEN WHY WAS IT SO POPULAR BACK THEN?



TRUE.

STILL, THE FACT THAT SUMO DOESN'T CHANGE IS PART OF ITS APPEAL.



OK.

LET'S IMAGINE THERE'S A SUMO BOOM GOING ON RIGHT NOW.



BUT THERE'S SOMETHING I SHOULD POINT OUT...



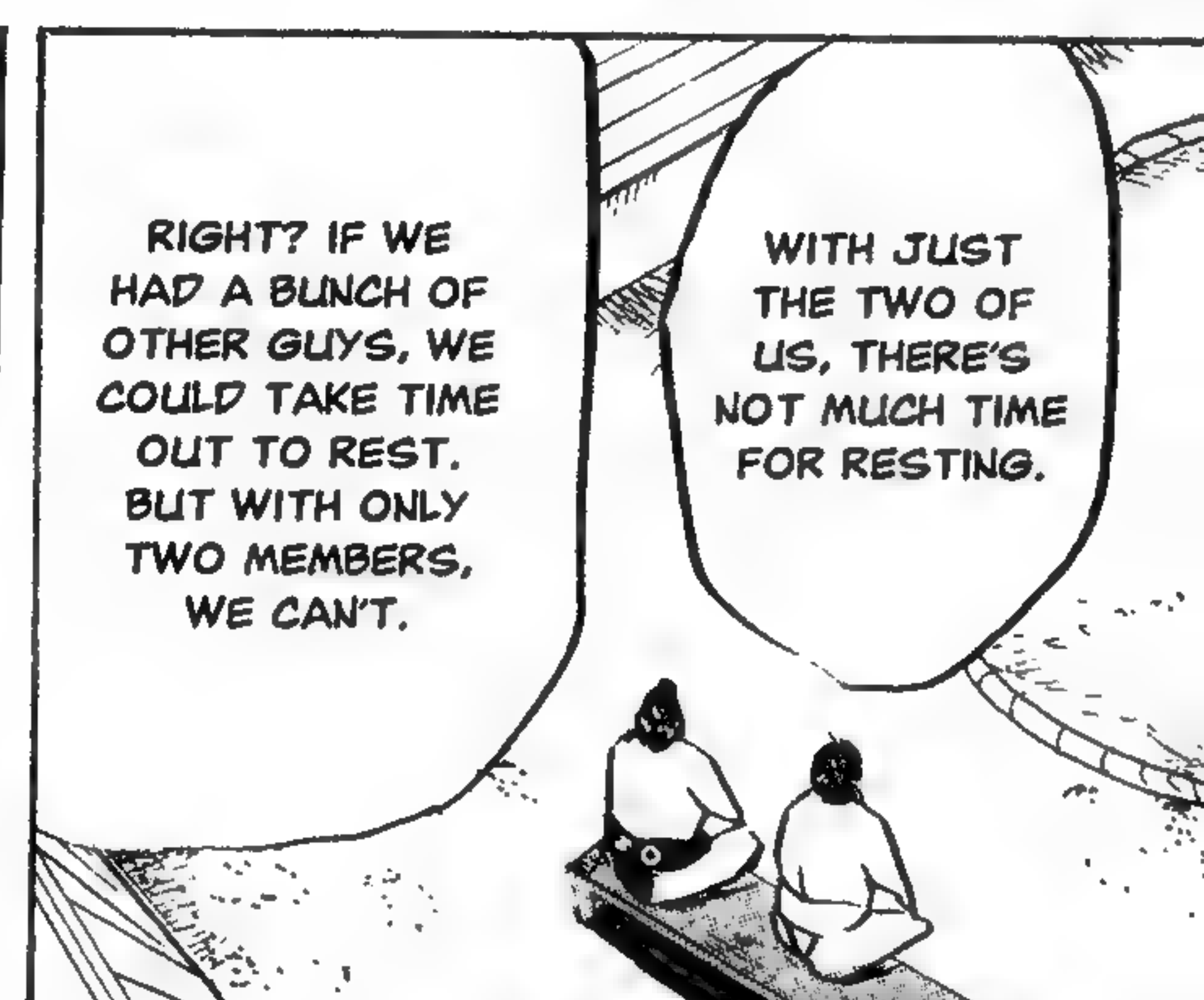
OH, YEAH.

PROBABLY BECAUSE WE'RE THE ONLY TWO MEMBERS.



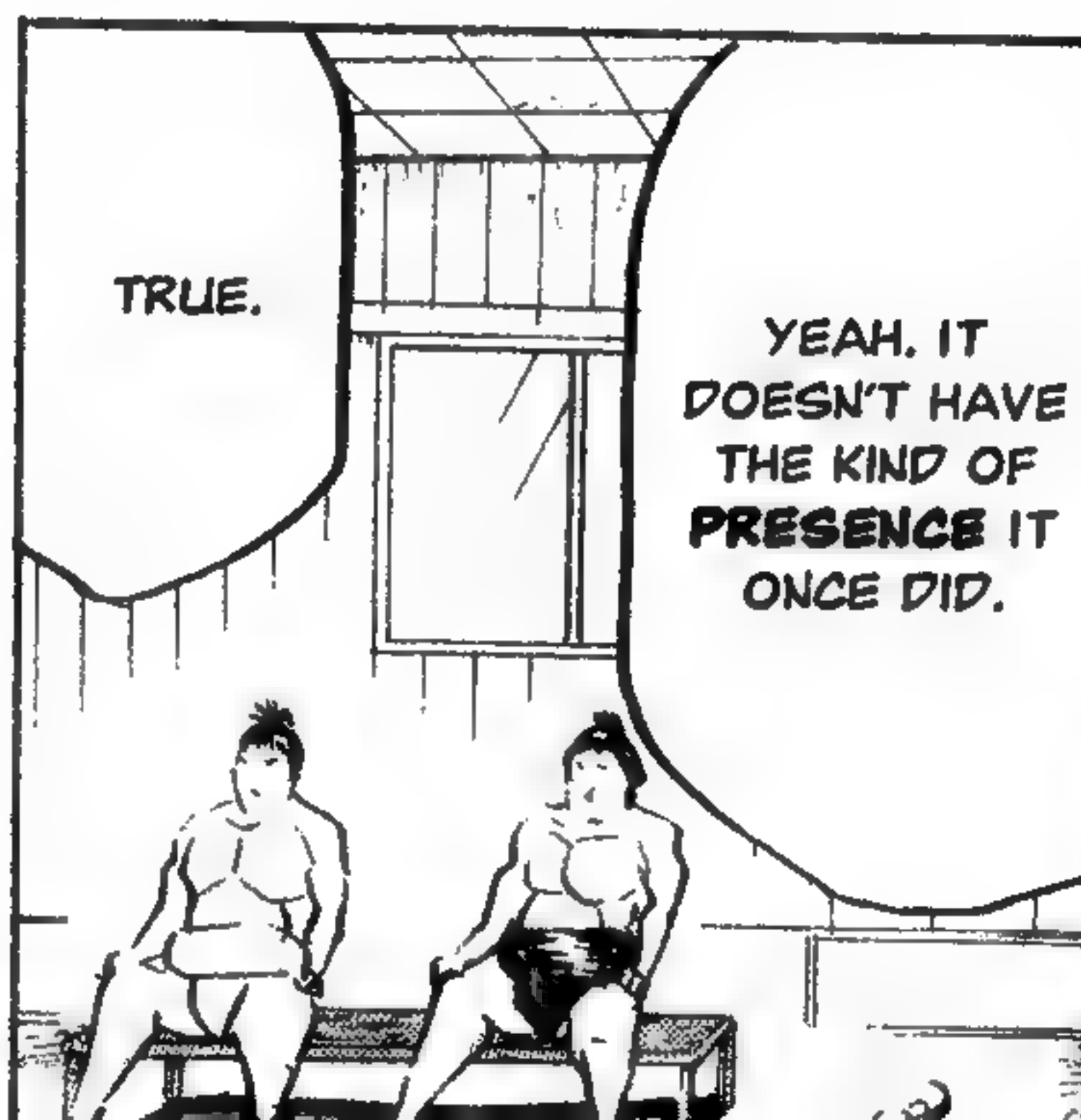
I'VE TRIED, BUT THERE HAVEN'T BEEN ANY TAKERS.

WE SHOULD TRY TO GET SOME MORE MEMBERS.



RIGHT? IF WE HAD A BUNCH OF OTHER GUYS, WE COULD TAKE TIME OUT TO REST. BUT WITH ONLY TWO MEMBERS, WE CAN'T.

WITH JUST THE TWO OF US, THERE'S NOT MUCH TIME FOR RESTING.

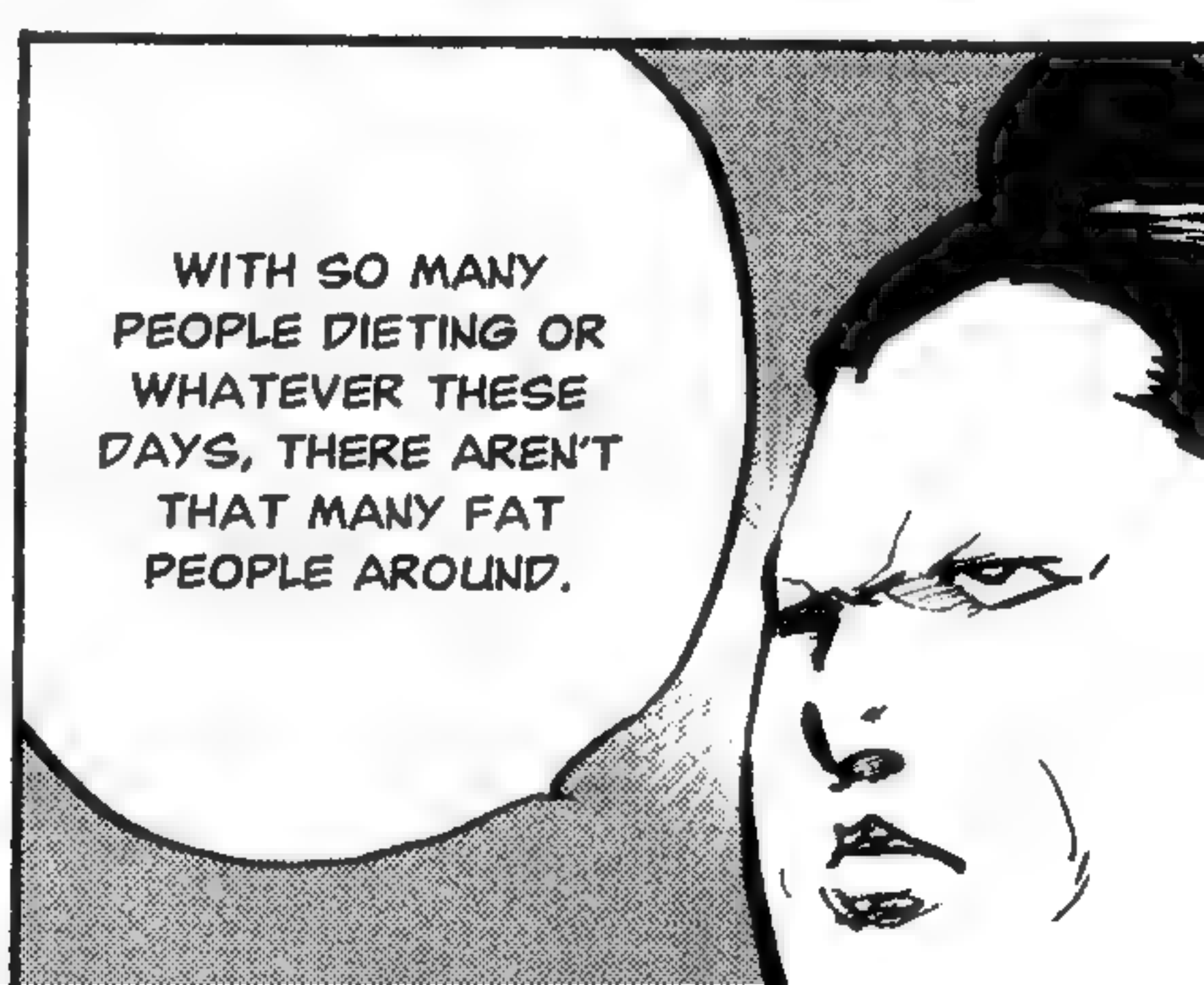
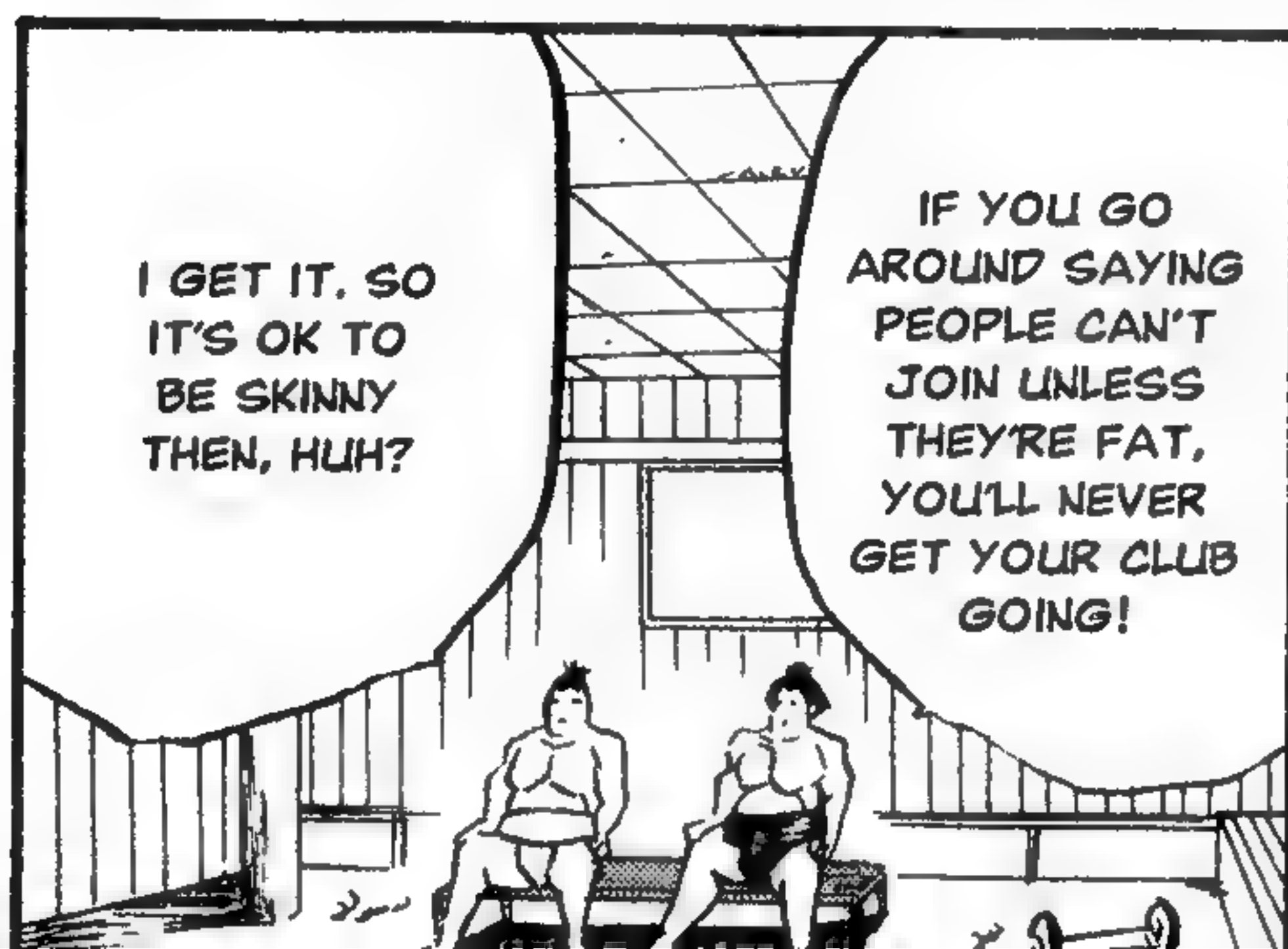
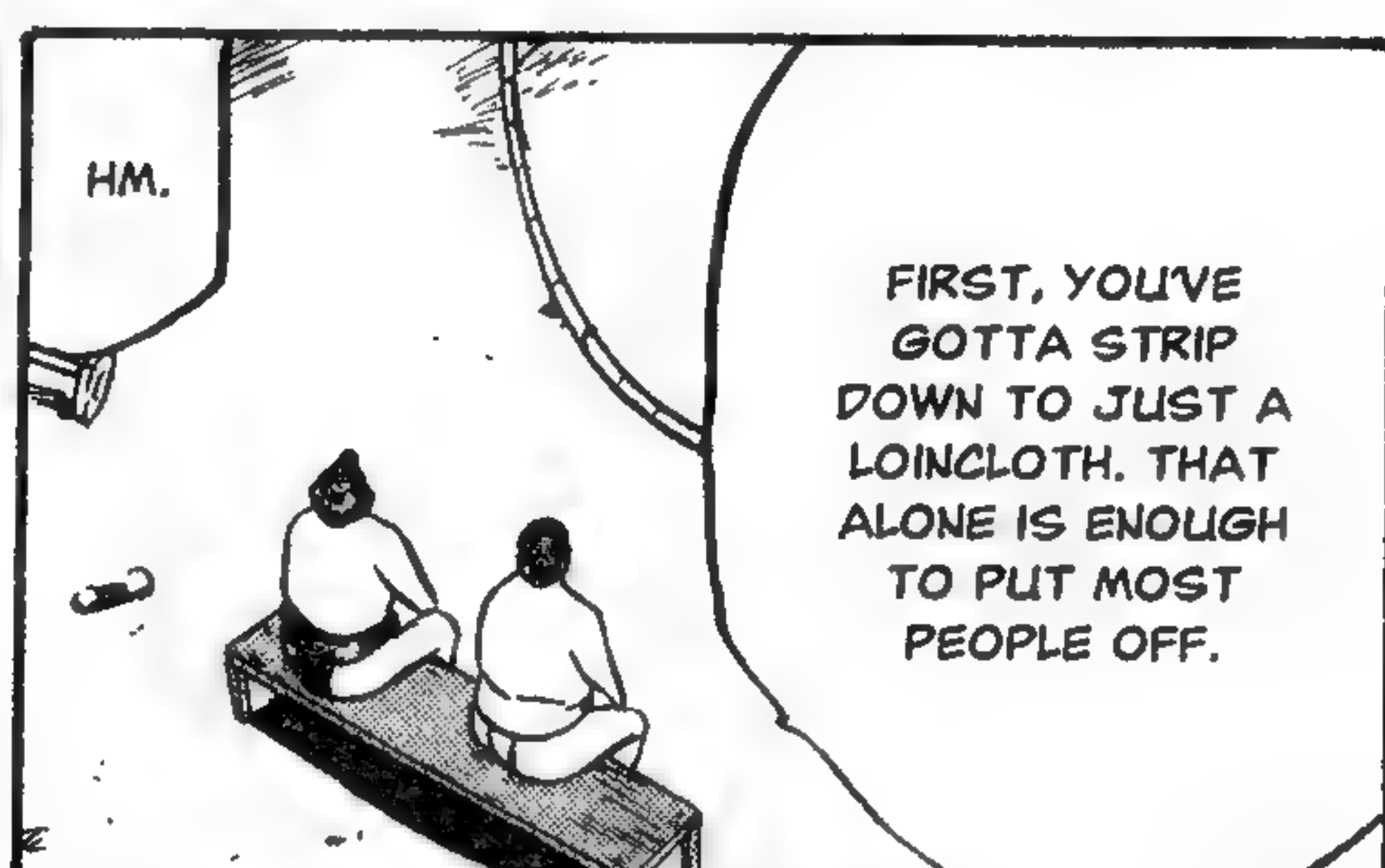
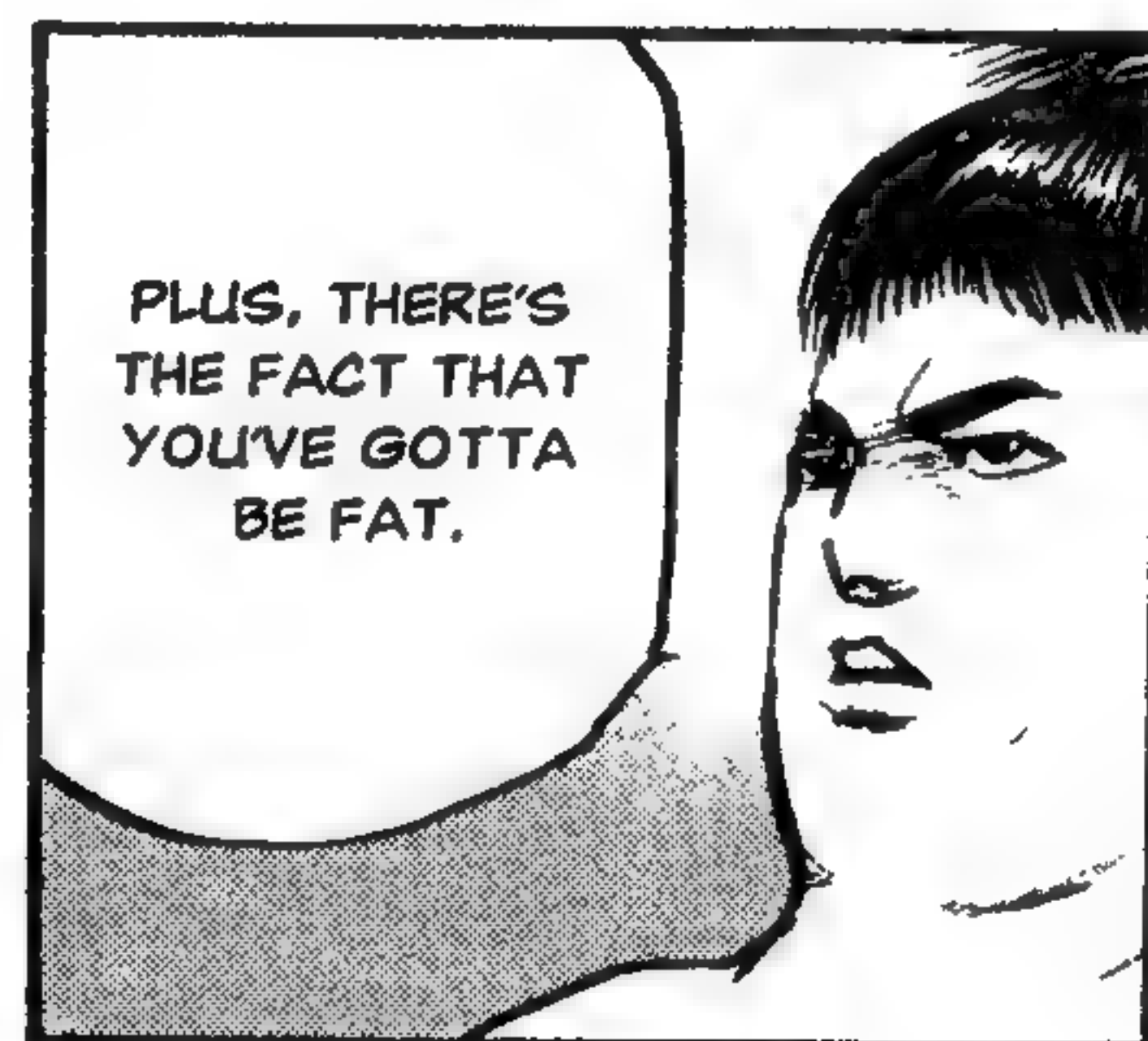
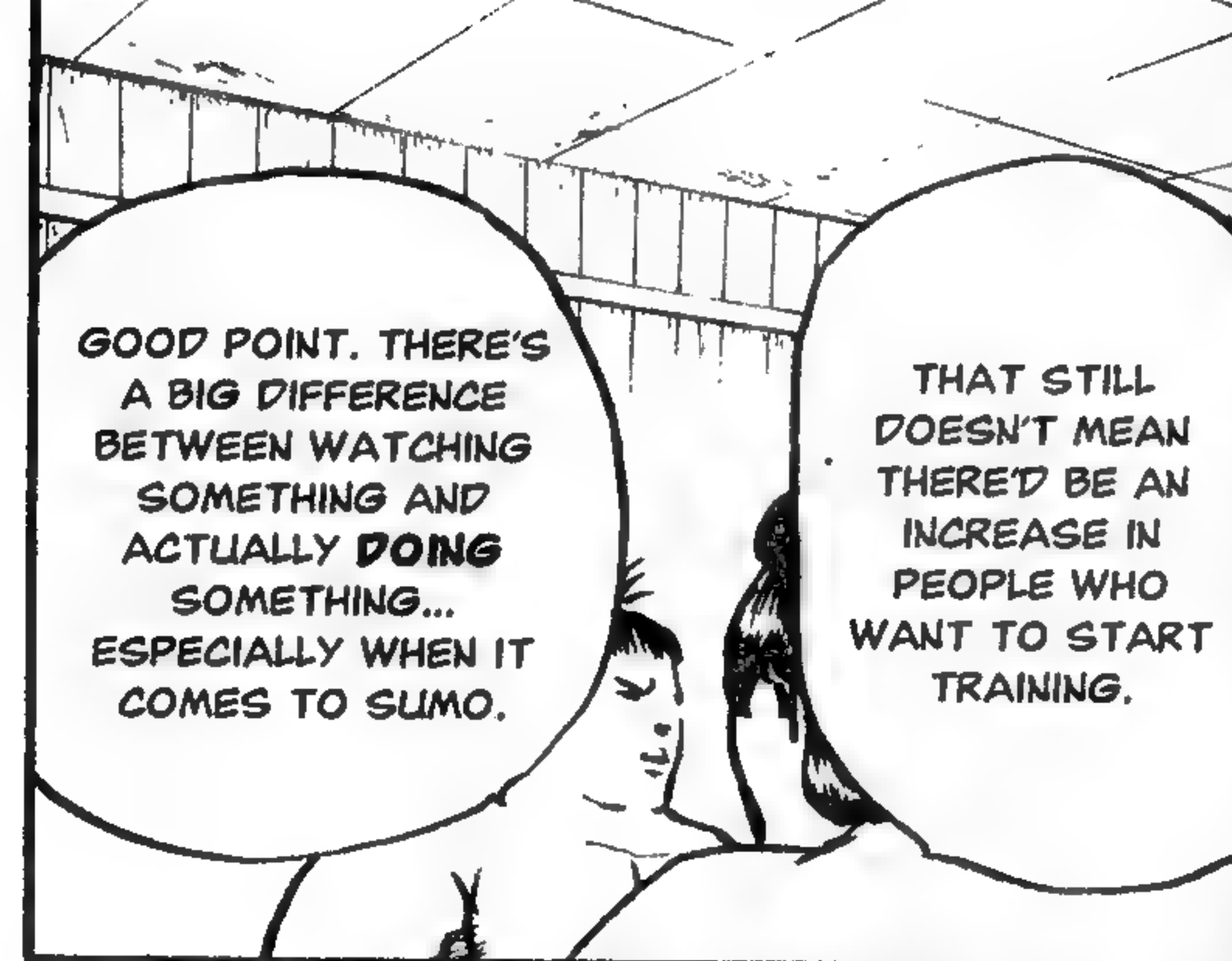
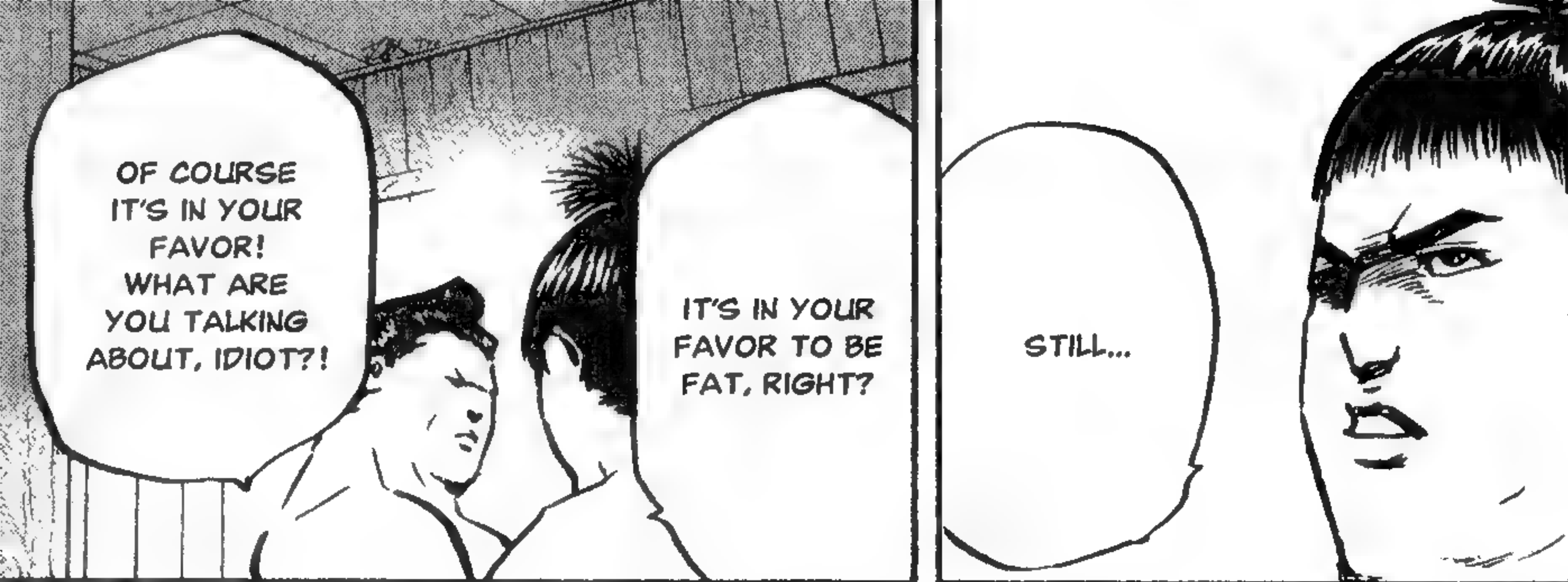


TRUE.

YEAH. IT DOESN'T HAVE THE KIND OF PRESENCE IT ONCE DID.



SUMO JUST ISN'T POPULAR THESE DAYS.





BUT TAKE
A LOOK AT
THOSE TWO.

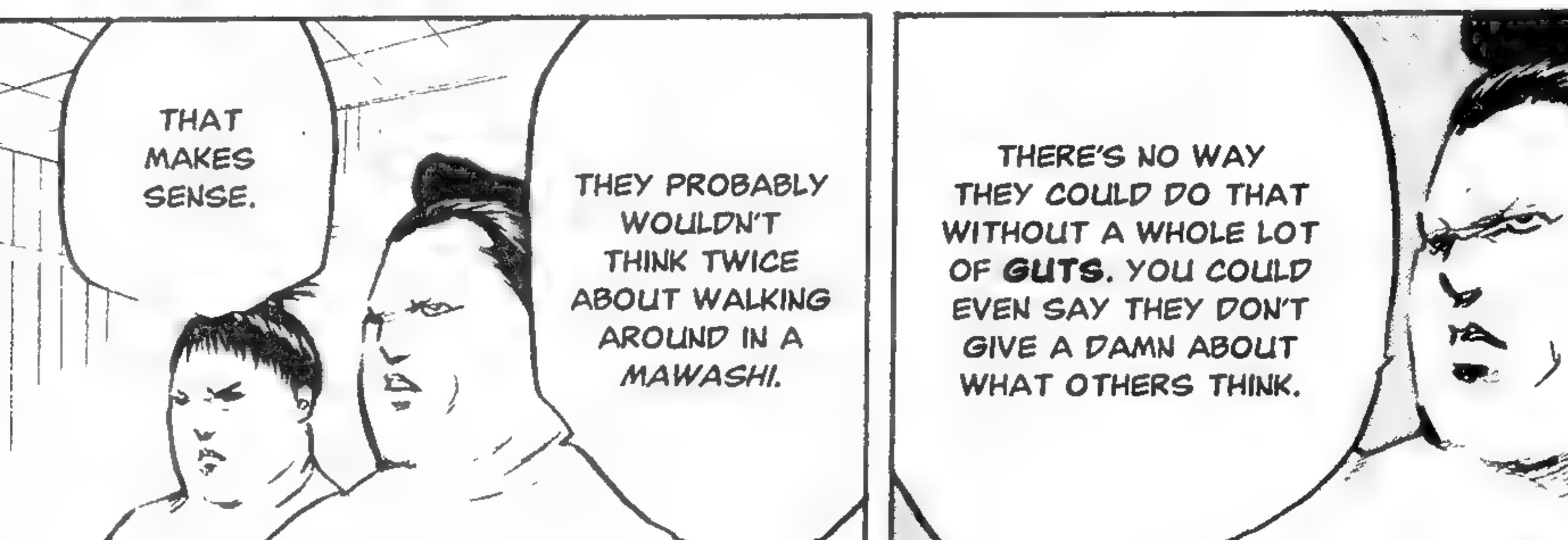
TRUE.
MOST PEOPLE
WOULD BE
PRETTY
EMBAR-
RASSED.

YOU TELL THE
AVERAGE PERSON
TO STRIP DOWN AND
PUT ONE OF THESE
BAD BOYS ON, I DON'T
THINK THEY'D BE TOO
KEEN ON THE IDEA.



BUT THOSE
GUYS ACTUALLY
WALK AROUND
OUTSIDE WITH
THAT STUFF
ON!

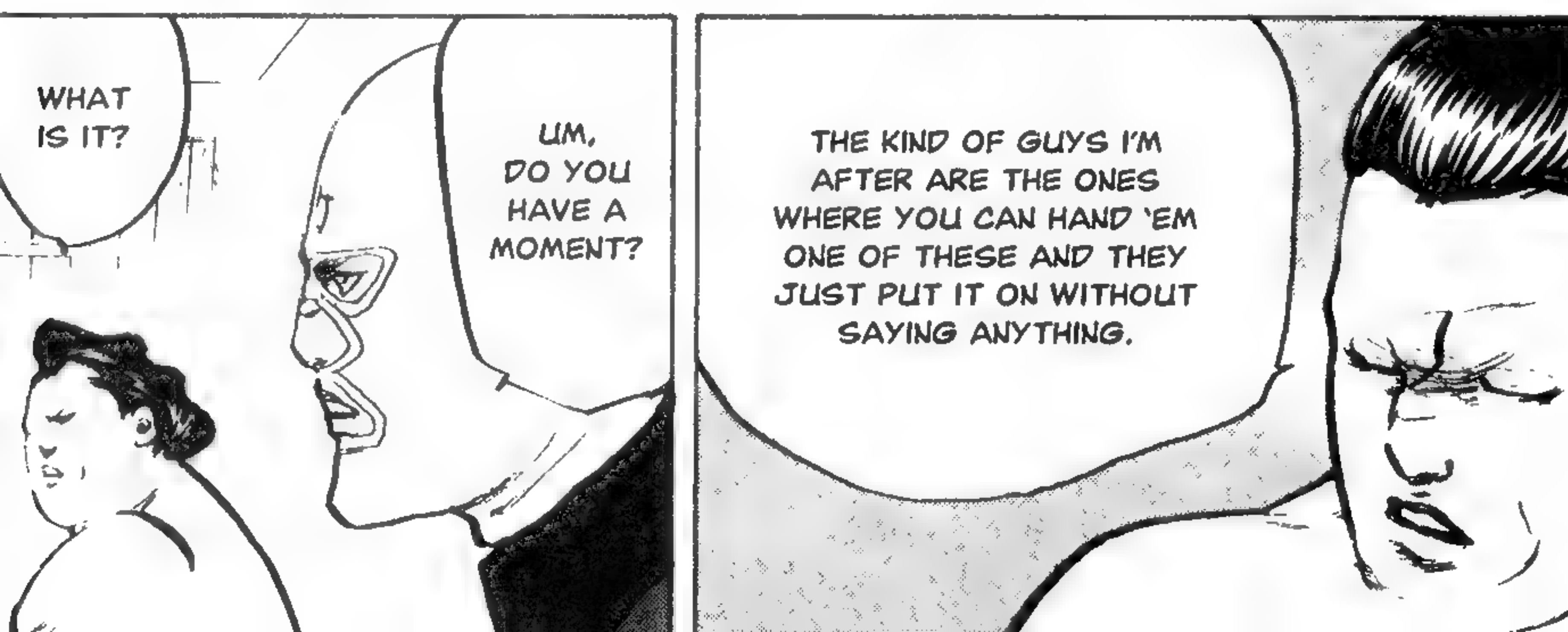
THAT WEIRD
MAKEUP FOR
NO REASON...
I DON'T EVEN
KNOW WHAT'S
GOING ON WITH
THAT MASK.



THAT
MAKES
SENSE.

THEY PROBABLY
WOULDN'T
THINK TWICE
ABOUT WALKING
AROUND IN A
MAWASHI.

THERE'S NO WAY
THEY COULD DO THAT
WITHOUT A WHOLE LOT
OF **GUTS**. YOU COULD
EVEN SAY THEY DON'T
GIVE A DAMN ABOUT
WHAT OTHERS THINK.



WHAT
IS IT?

UM,
DO YOU
HAVE A
MOMENT?

THE KIND OF GUYS I'M
AFTER ARE THE ONES
WHERE YOU CAN HAND 'EM
ONE OF THESE AND THEY
JUST PUT IT ON WITHOUT
SAYING ANYTHING.



HUH?!

LET'S
TAKE
THESE
TWO.



OK.



YOU JUST
DON'T GET
IT, DO
YOU?

I'M SORRY, BUT
I CAN'T HELP
FEELING THAT
THESE TWO
ARE THE **LEAST**
SUITED FOR THE
CLUB.



WAIT!

SORRY,
BUT THE
REST OF
YOU CAN
GO.



I TOLD YOU BEFORE,
THE MOST IMPORTANT
THING IS THAT YOU
HAVE TO BE ABLE
TO WEAR ONLY A
MAWASHI.



IDIOT!

AT LEAST
CONSIDER
THAT GORILLA
OVER THERE.



I DON'T
KNOW.
BUT WE
PROBABLY
SHOULDN'T
GET OUR
HOPES UP.

I WONDER
IF THEY'LL
COME BACK
TODAY.



YES.

Y-YOU'VE GOT
YOUR MAWASHI
ON! DID YOU
PUT THOSE ON
YOURSELVES?!



BUT ONCE WE
THOUGHT OF IT AS
PART OF THE SPORT,
IT STOPPED BEING
EMBARRASSING...
ACTUALLY, WE
STARTED FEELING
SORT OF PROUD.

AT
FIRST,
YES.

ARE YOU
EMBAR-
RASSED?

SORRY
FOR
ASKING
THIS,
BUT...



WHAT?!

IT'S JUST, WE'RE
STARTING TO
HAVE A PROBLEM
WITH THIS WHOLE
MAWASHI THING...



YOU'RE
RIGHT. I KINDA
FLEW OFF
THE HANDLE
THERE...
SORRY.

PLEASE CALM
DOWN! IF
WE START
PRESSURING
THEM, IT COULD
BE TOO MUCH,
EVEN FOR GUYS
LIKE THESE.

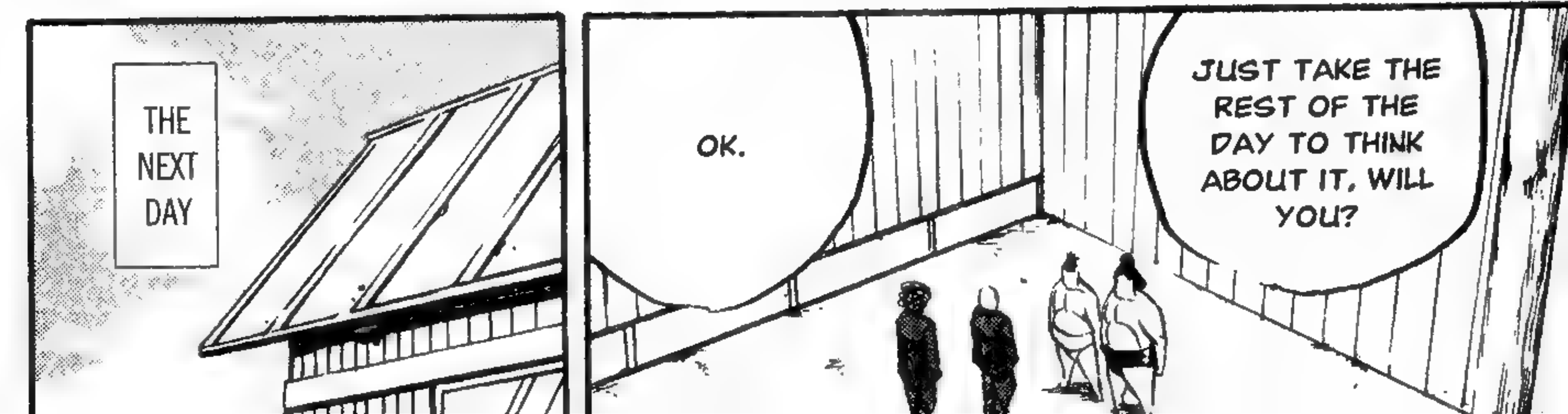
HOW CAN YOU GO
OUT LOOKING LIKE
THAT AND GET
EMBARRASSED
ABOUT A
LOINCLOTH?!



YOU DON'T
HAVE TO
GIVE ME AN
ANSWER NOW.

THEN
IT'S
NO BIG
DEAL.

IT'S NOT UNUSUAL
TO FEEL A LITTLE
EMBARRASSED AT
FIRST, BUT YOU
GET USED TO IT.

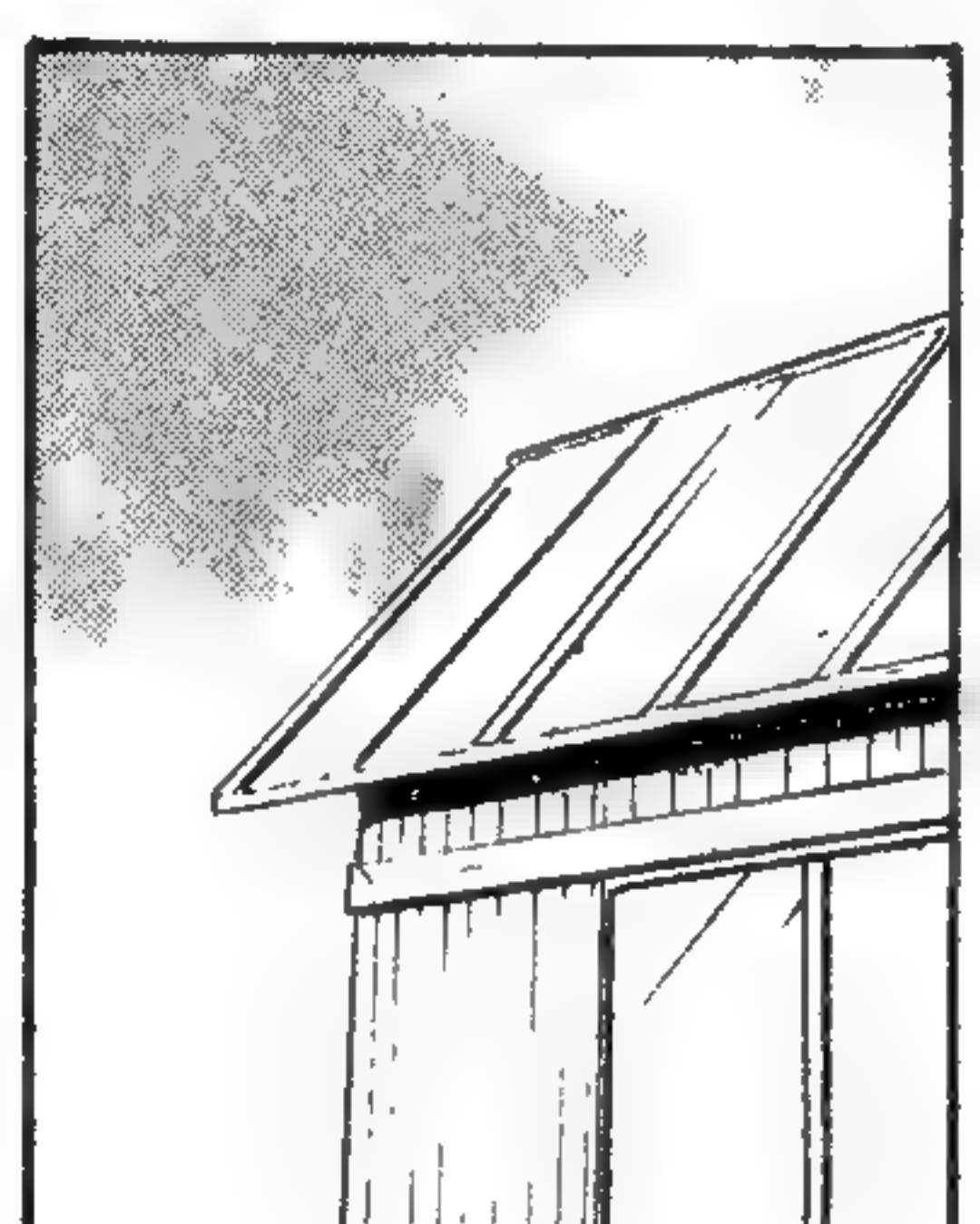
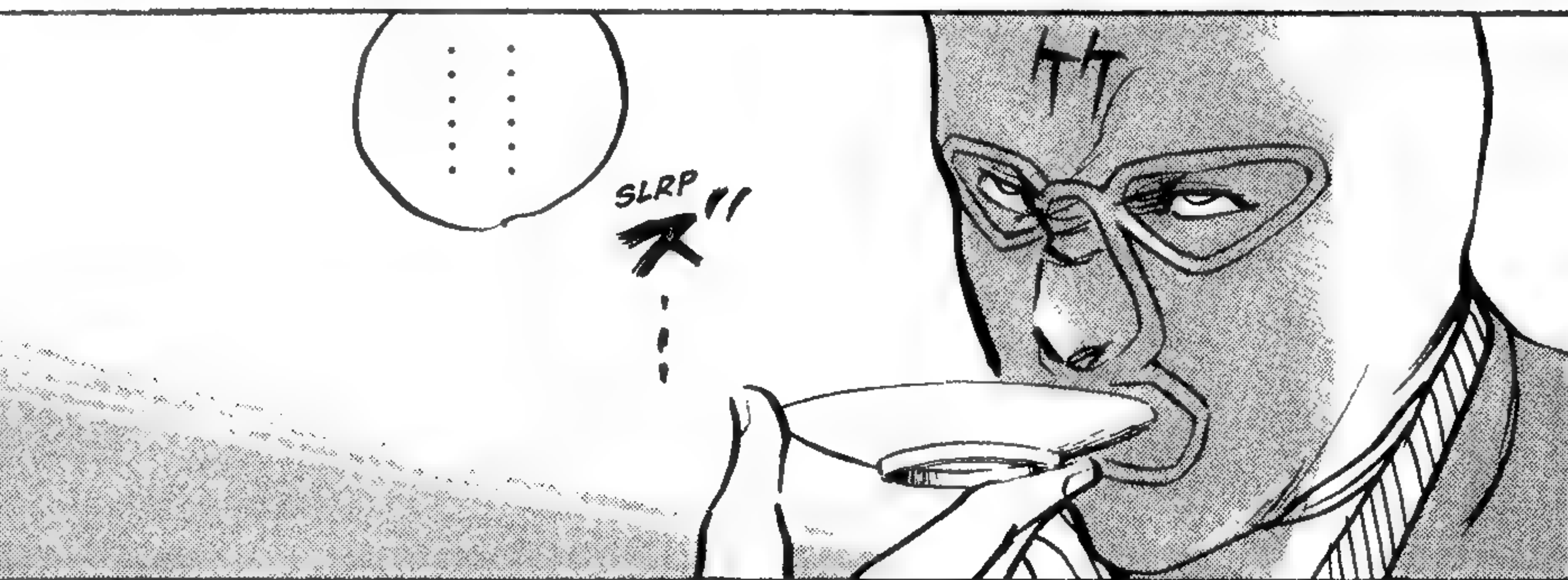


THE
NEXT
DAY

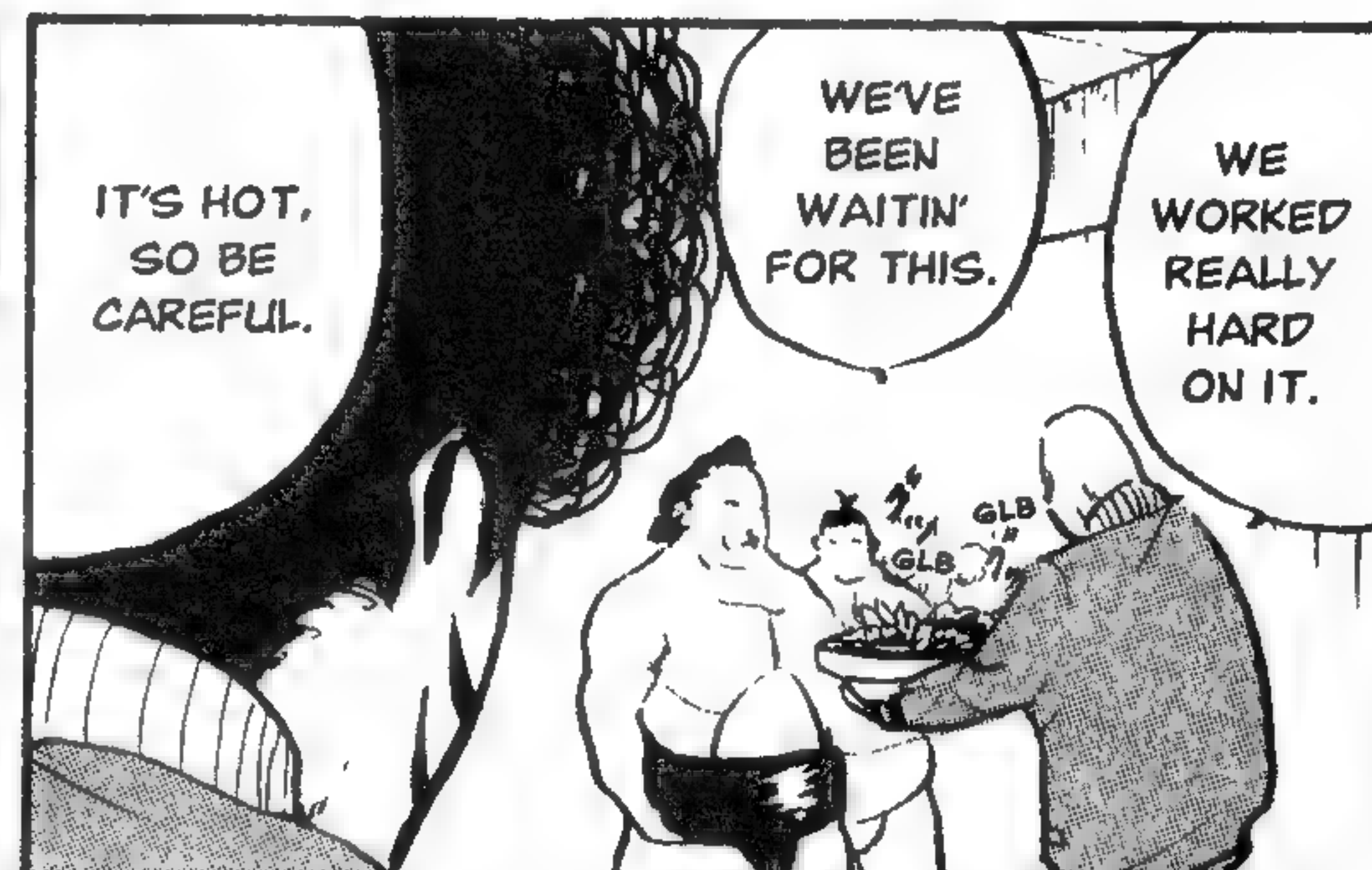
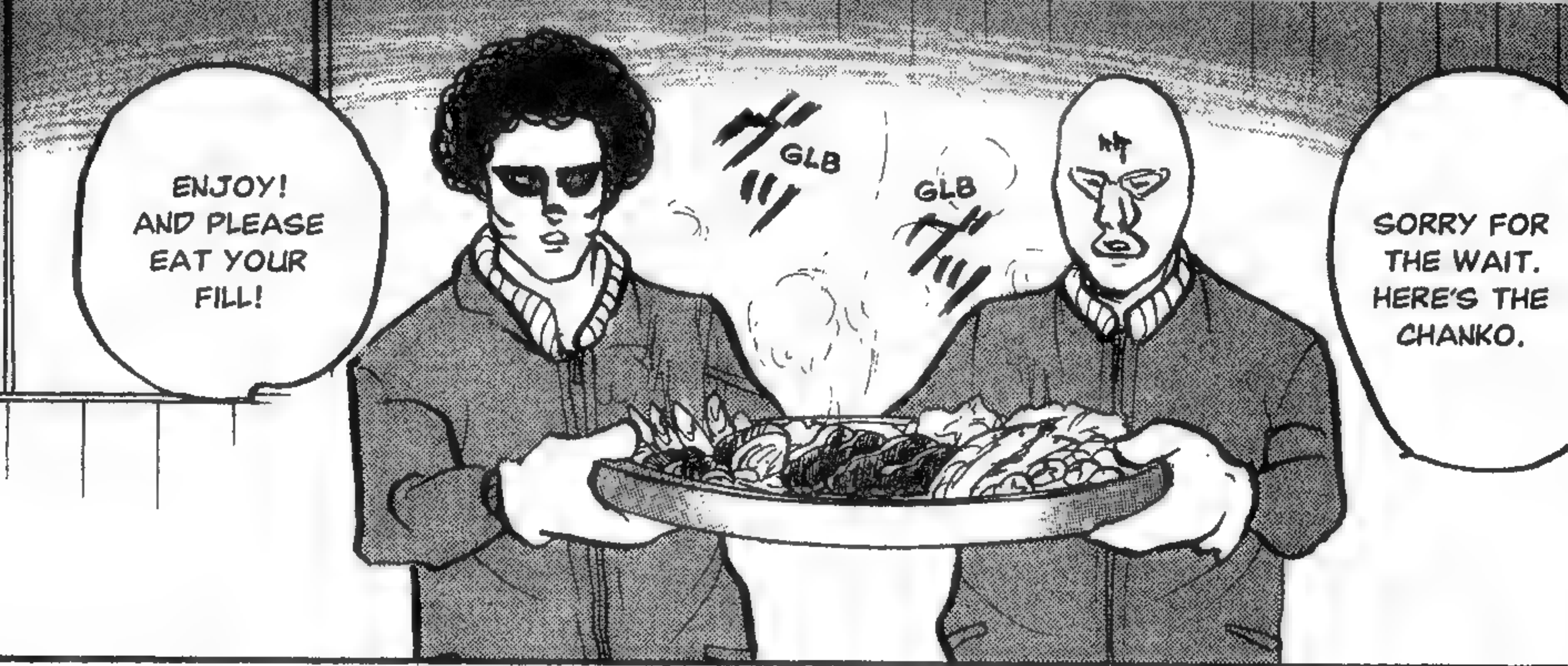
OK.

JUST TAKE THE
REST OF THE
DAY TO THINK
ABOUT IT, WILL
YOU?

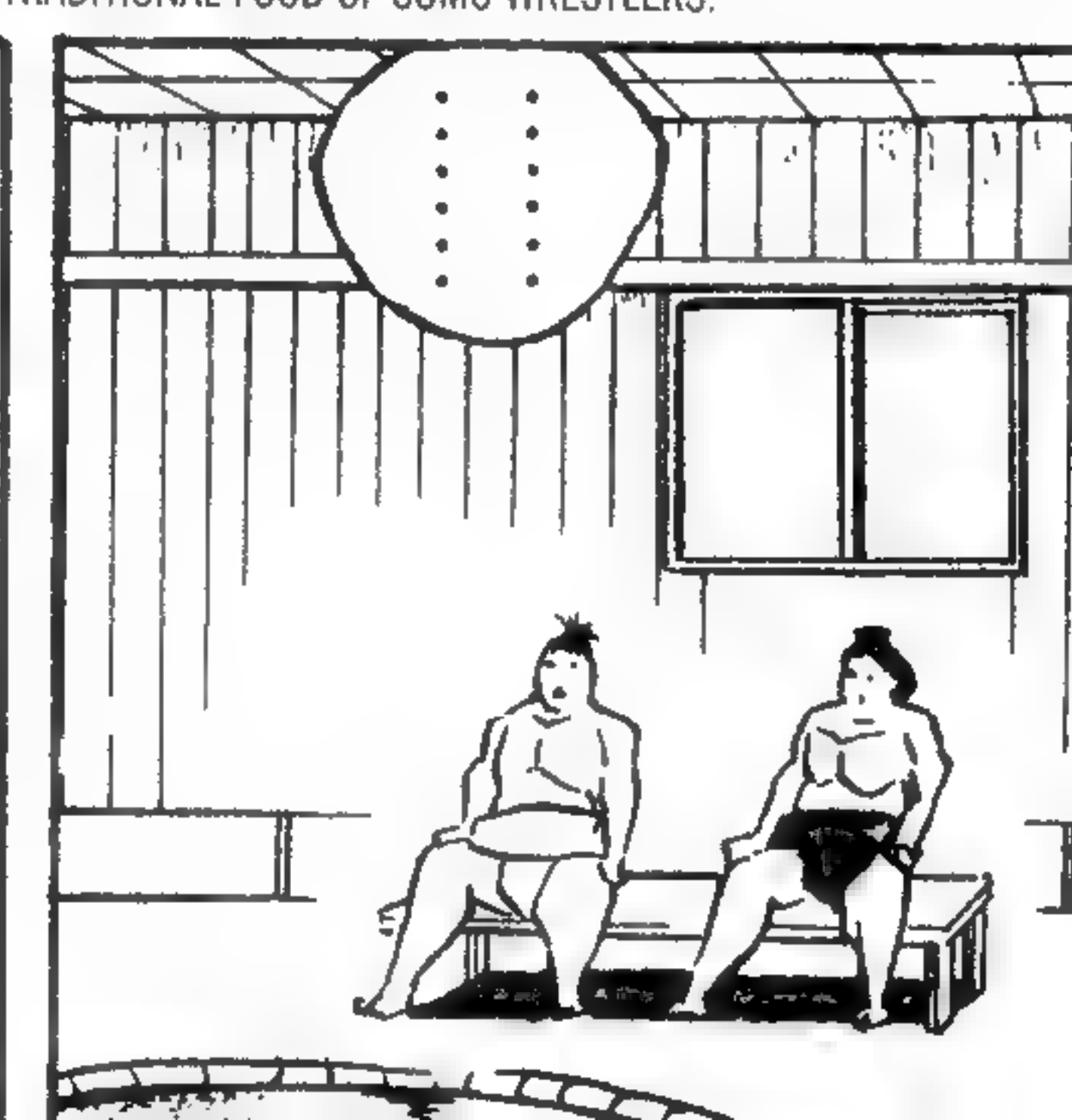
CHAPTER 245: **FATBOY SLIM**

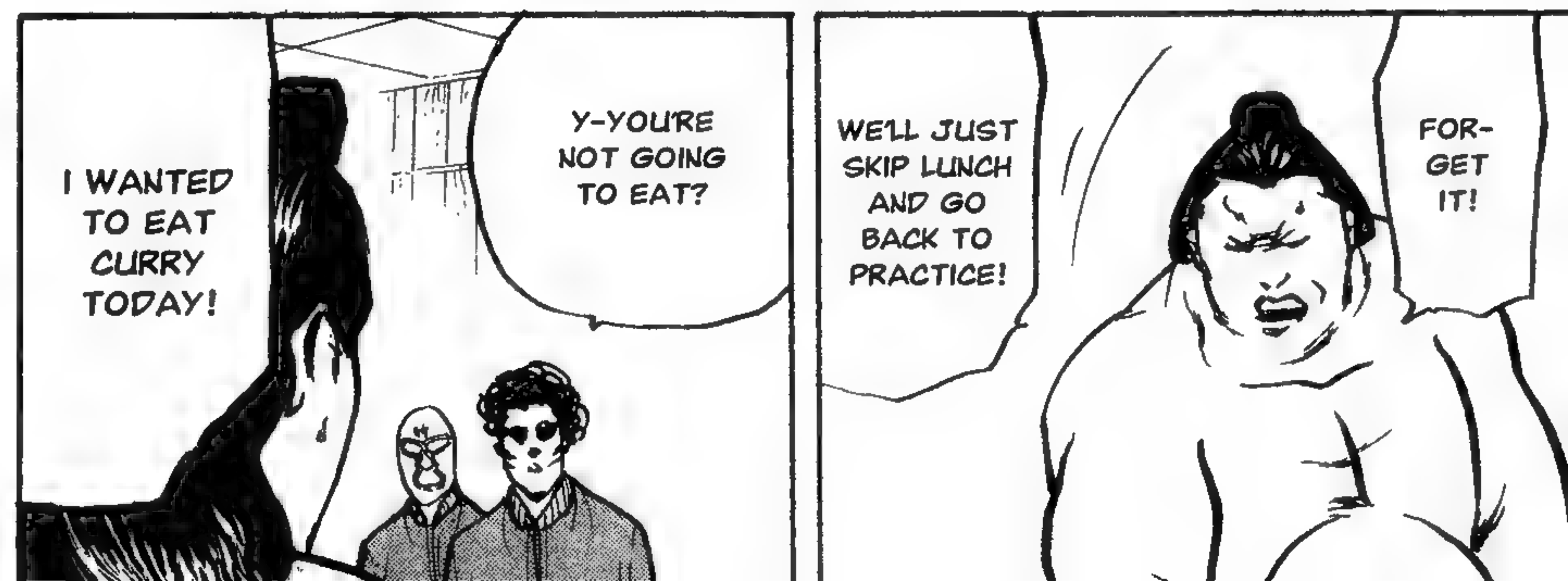
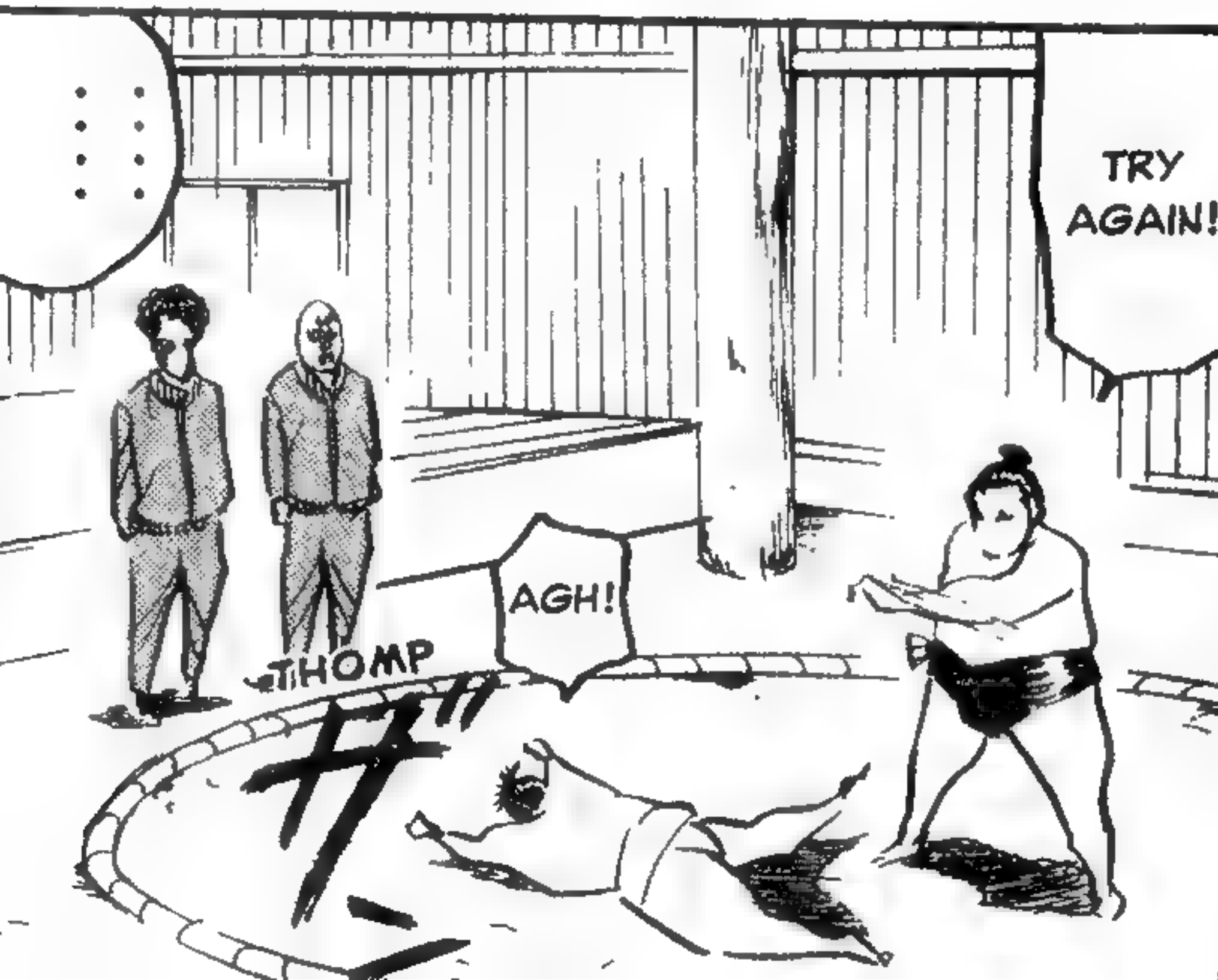
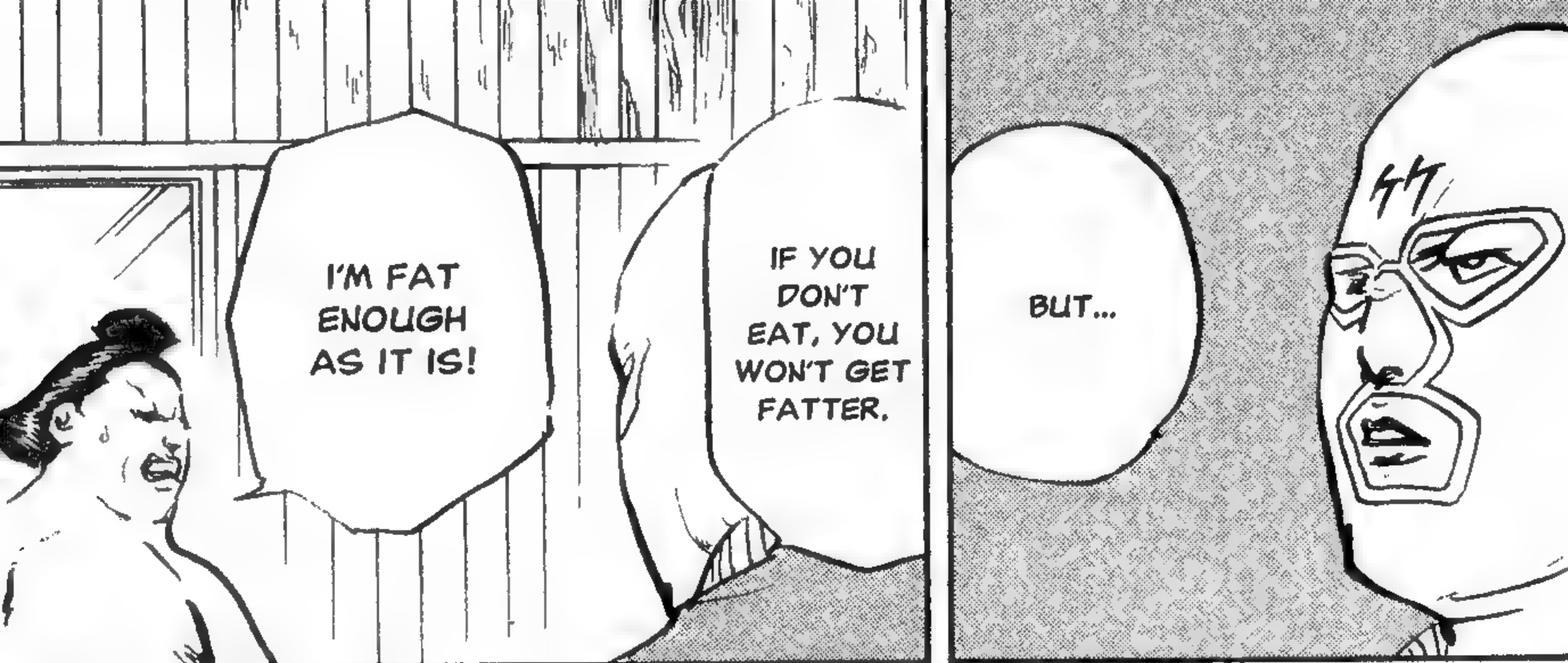


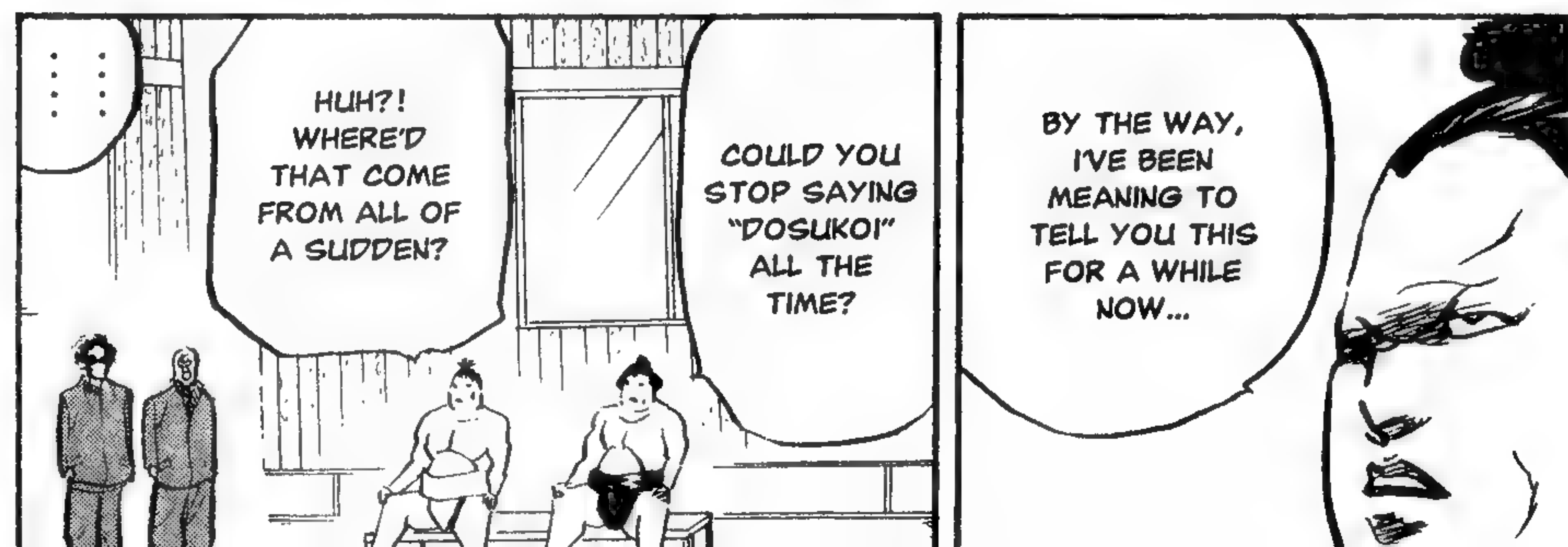
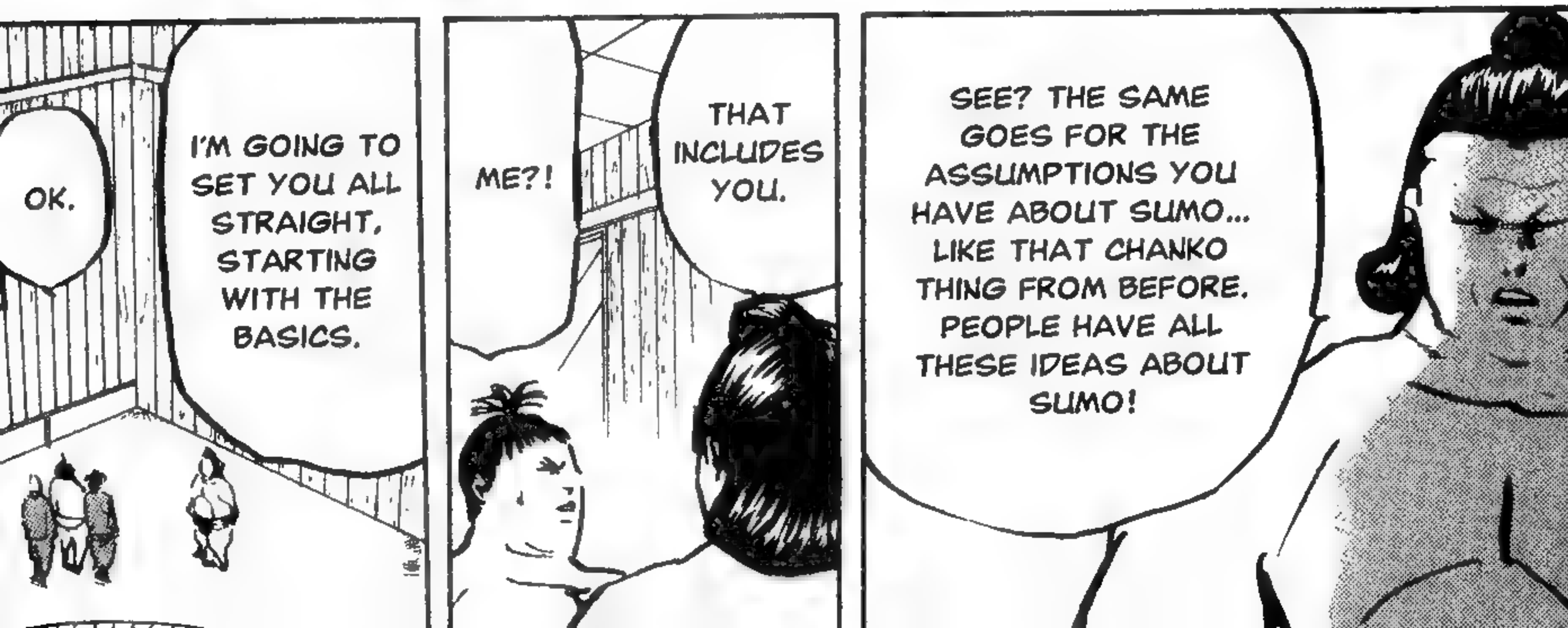
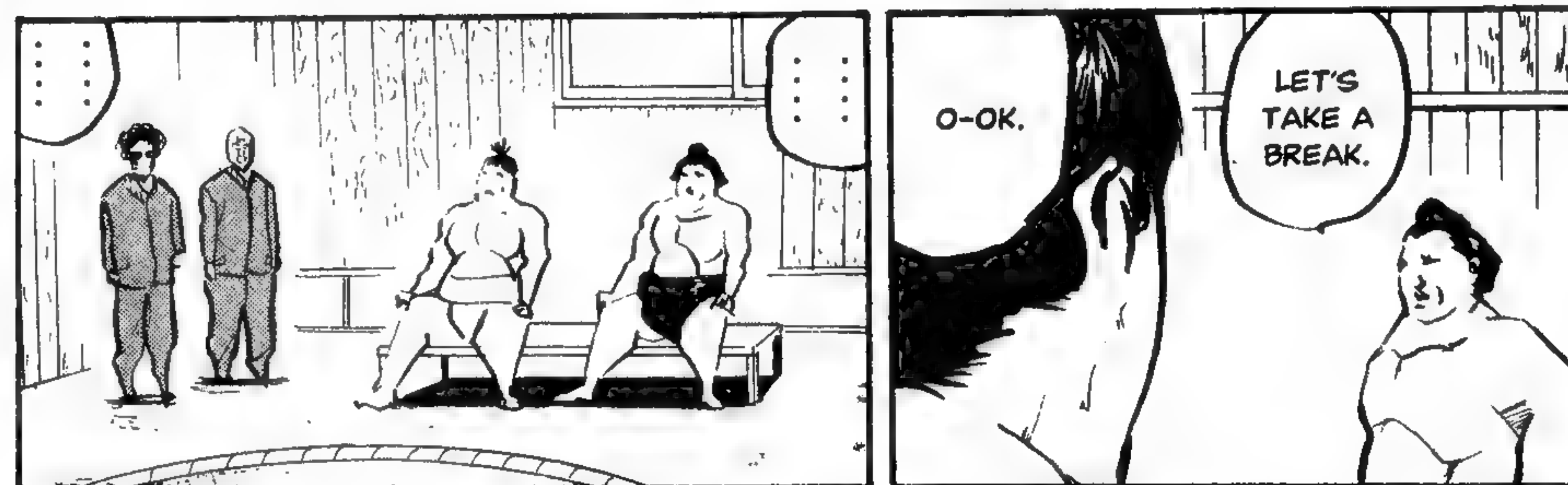
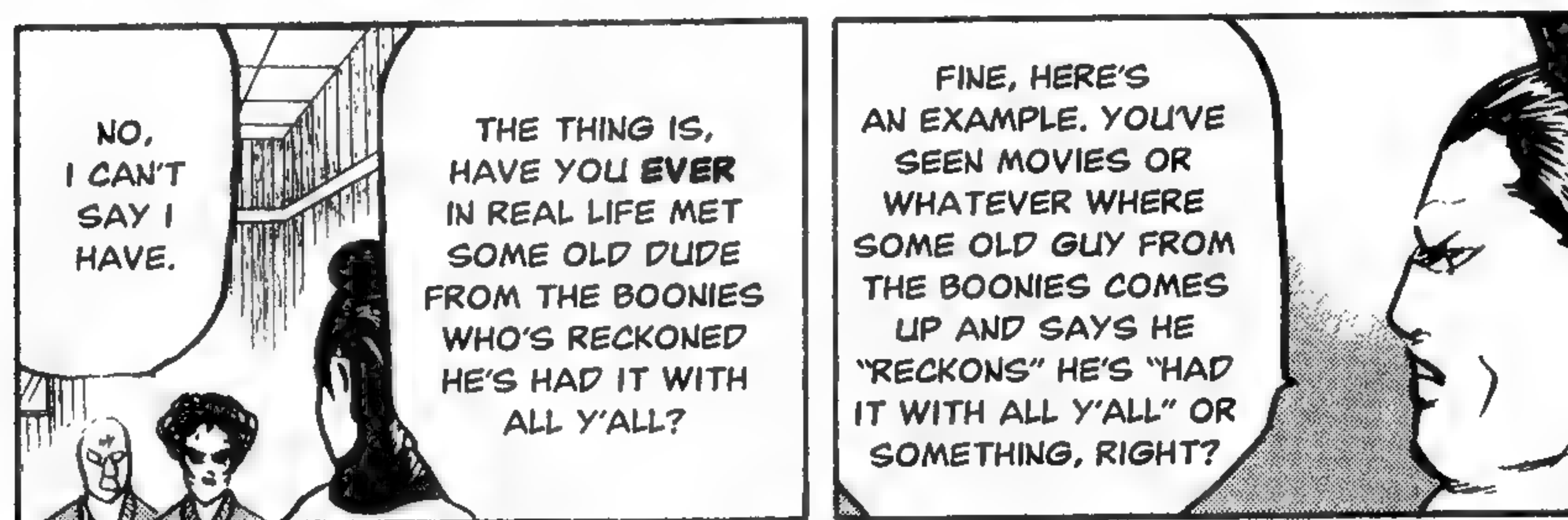
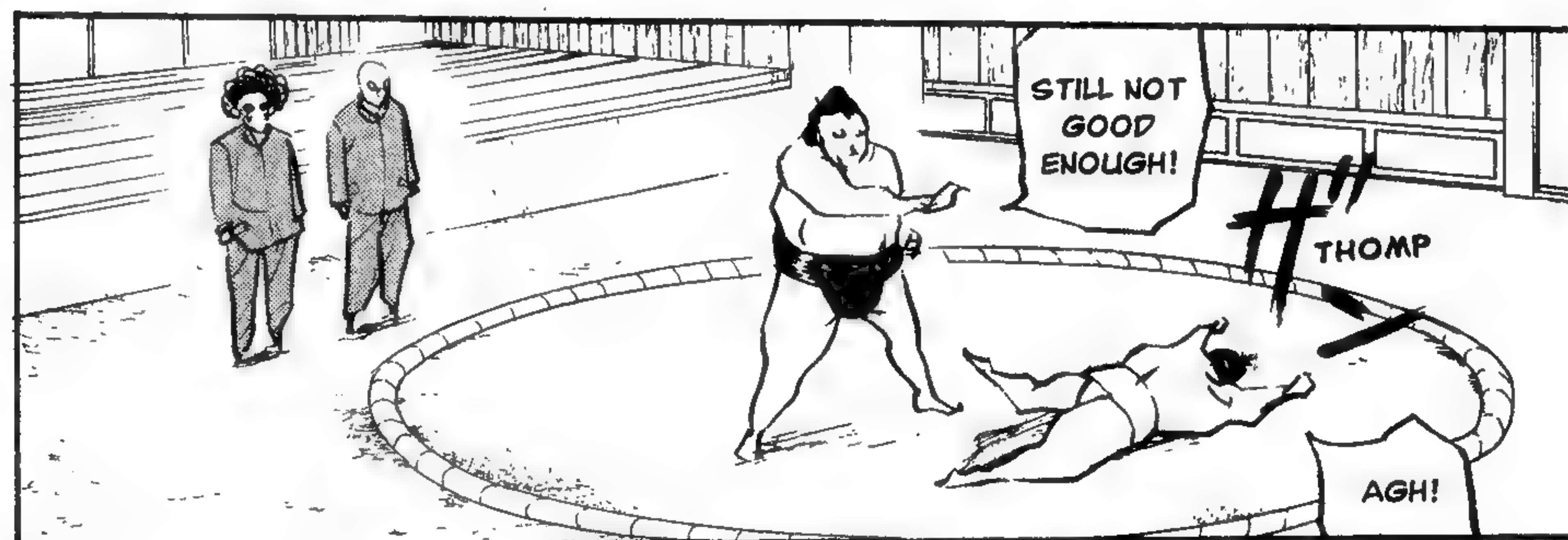
YEAH, THAT'S A PRETTY BIG PROBLEM.



*THE TRADITIONAL FOOD OF SUMO WRESTLERS.







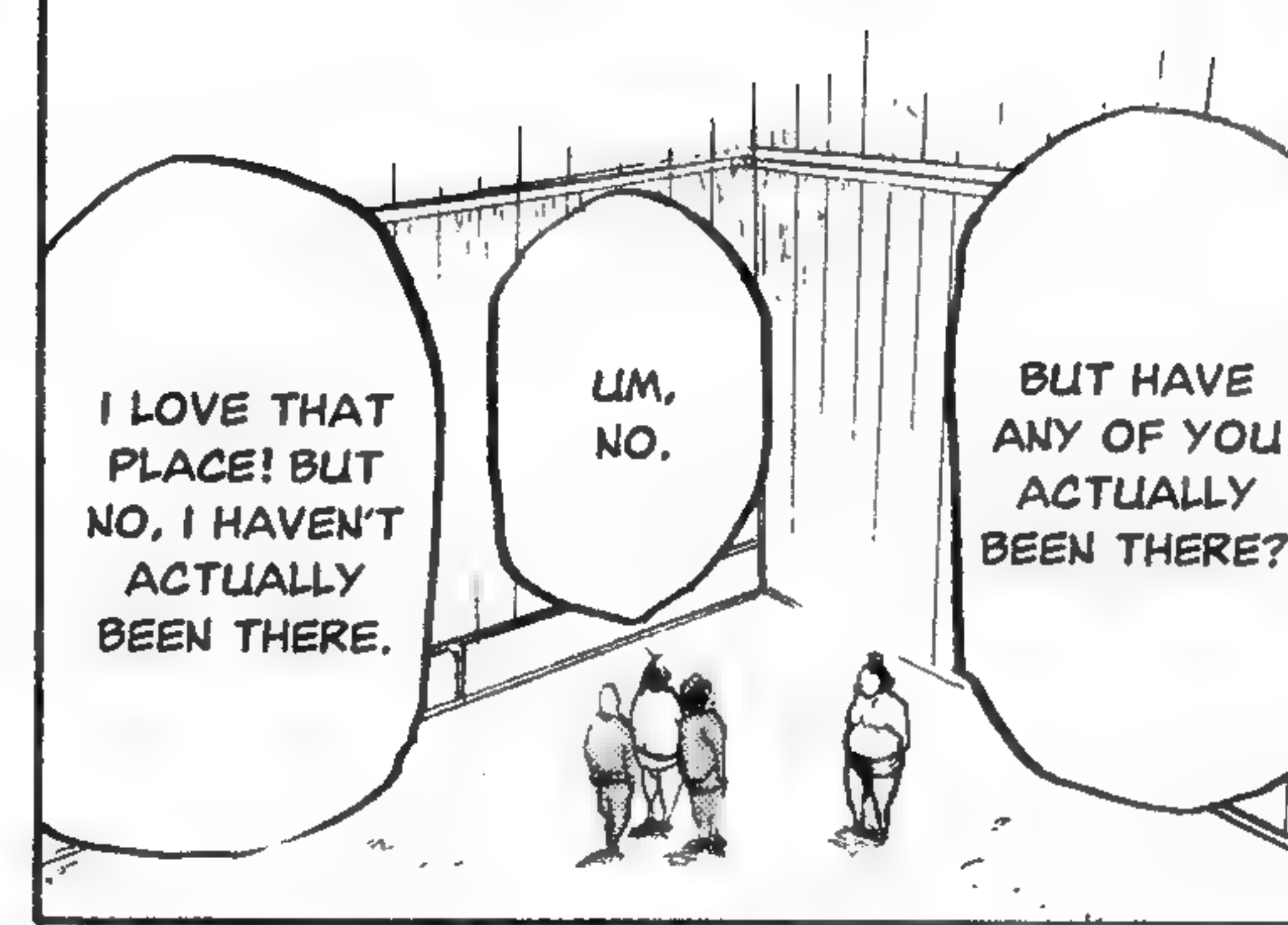


YOU KNOW, THERE ARE A MILLION THINGS I'D LIKE TO SAY ABOUT THIS PICTURE... BUT IF WE'RE GOING TO DO IT ONE BY ONE, LET'S START WITH THESE BUILDINGS IN THE BACKGROUND.



WHAT? IS SOMETHING NOT RIGHT?

I KNEW IT.



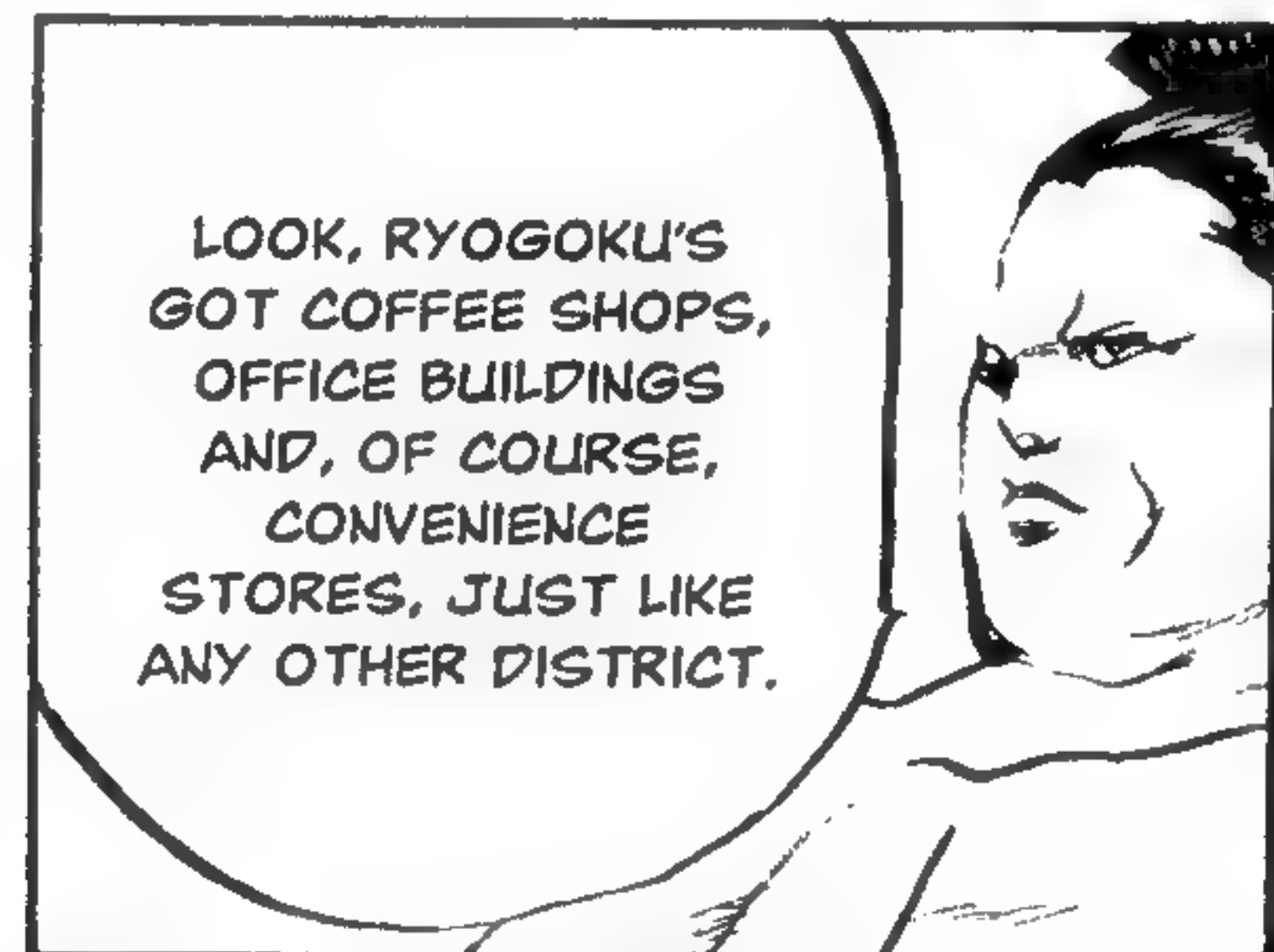
I LOVE THAT PLACE! BUT NO, I HAVEN'T ACTUALLY BEEN THERE.

UM, NO.

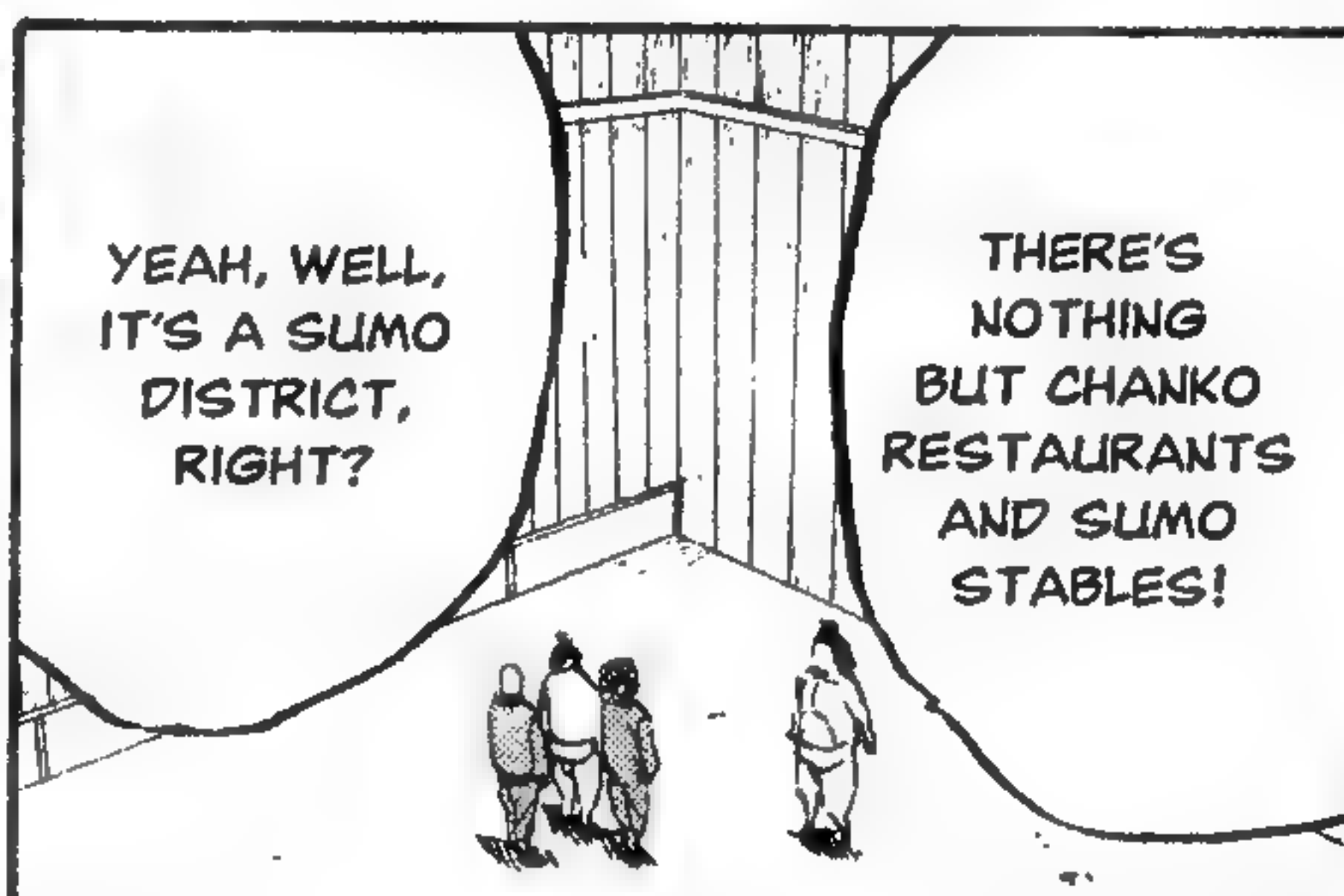
BUT HAVE ANY OF YOU ACTUALLY BEEN THERE?



LET'S START WITH **RYOGOKU**. YOU ALL KNOW THAT IT'S IN TOKYO AND IT'S THE CENTER OF OUR SUMO WORLD...



LOOK, **RYOGOKU**'S GOT COFFEE SHOPS, OFFICE BUILDINGS AND, OF COURSE, CONVENIENCE STORES, JUST LIKE ANY OTHER DISTRICT.



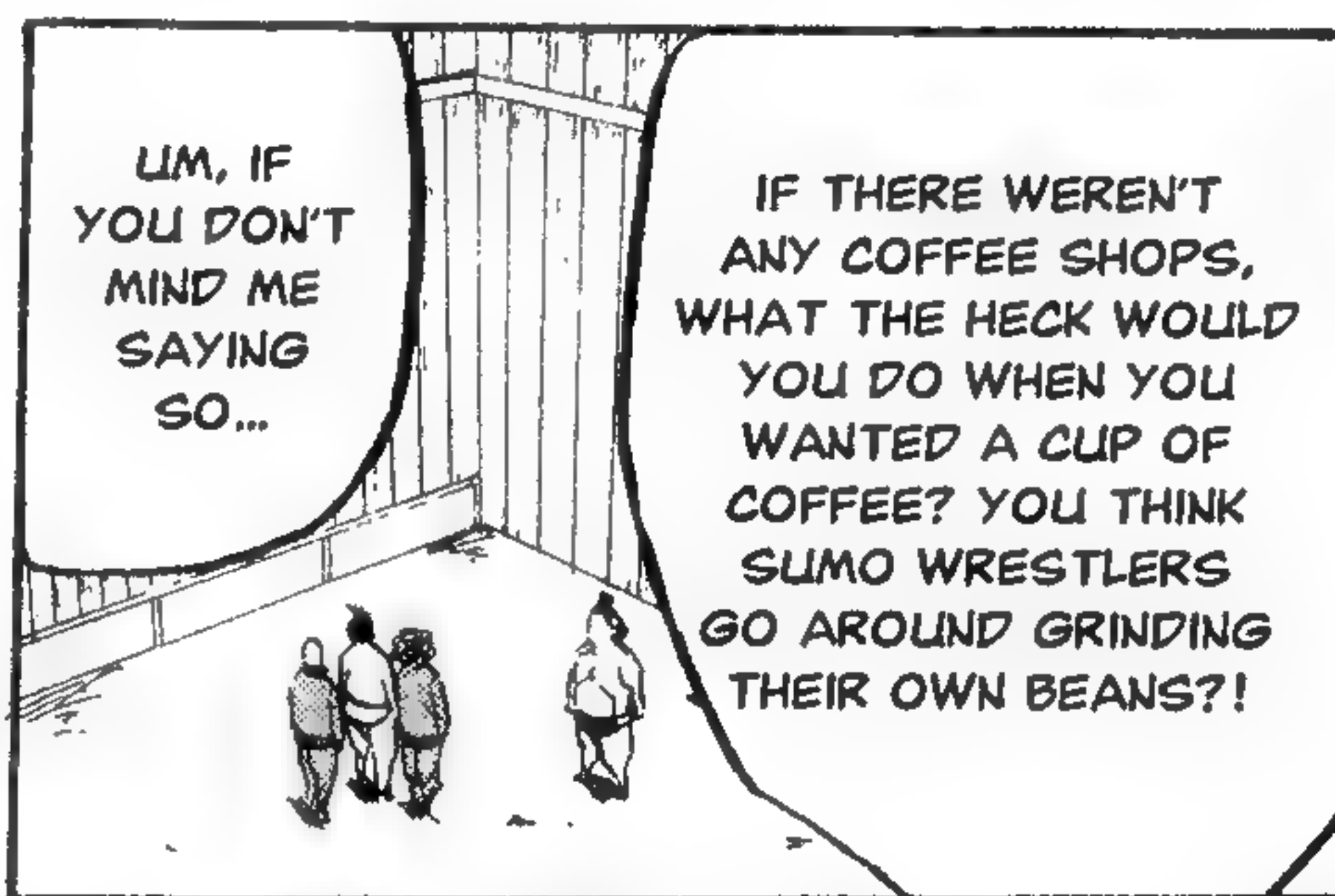
YEAH, WELL, IT'S A SUMO DISTRICT, RIGHT?

THERE'S NOTHING BUT **CHANKO** RESTAURANTS AND SUMO STABLES!



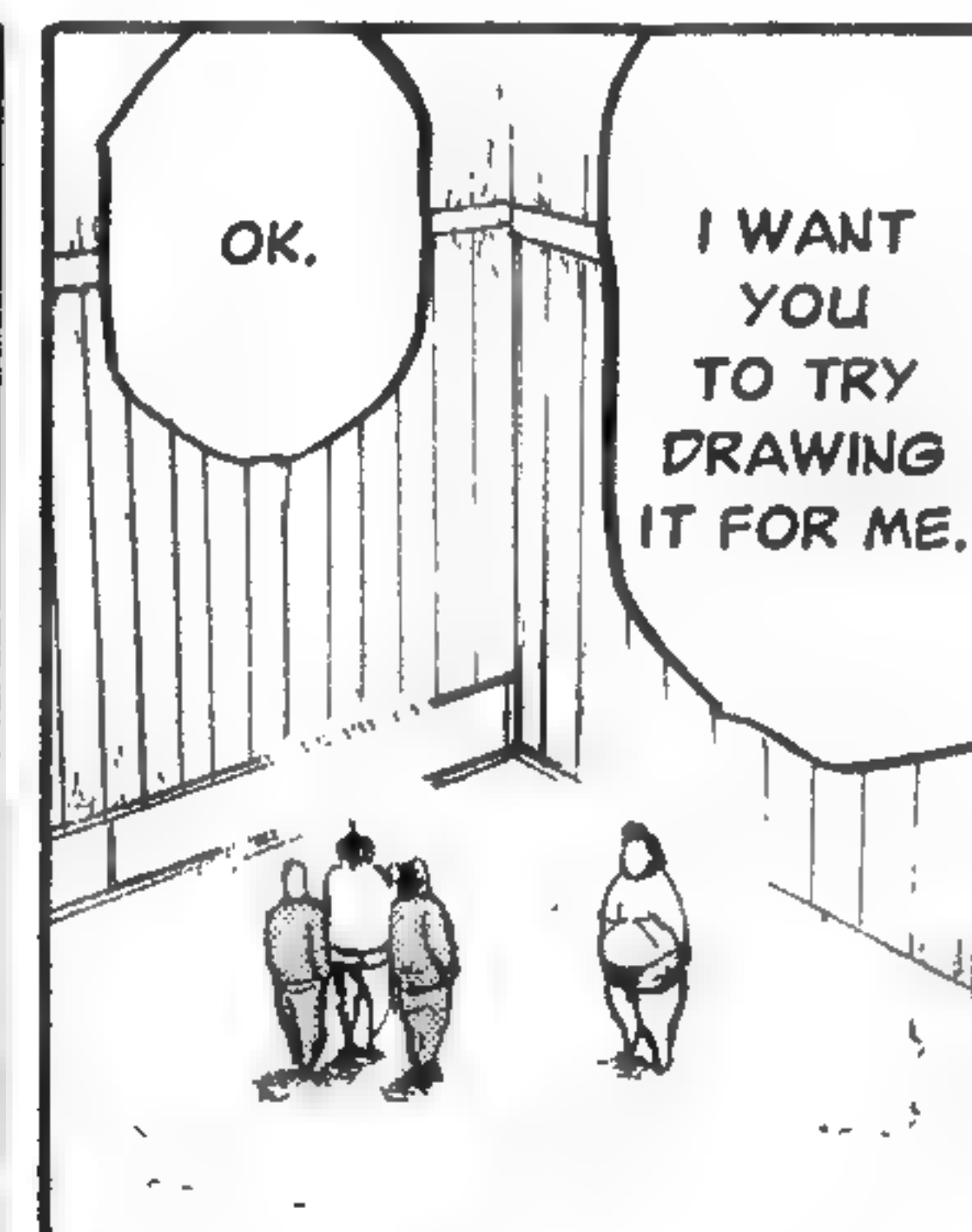
THERE YOU GO WITH YOUR WRONG IDEAS AGAIN.

I THINK IT'D BE STRANGE FOR A SUMO WRESTLER TO GO TO A COFFEE SHOP.



UM, IF YOU DON'T MIND ME SAYING SO...

IF THERE WEREN'T ANY COFFEE SHOPS, WHAT THE HECK WOULD YOU DO WHEN YOU WANTED A CUP OF COFFEE? YOU THINK SUMO WRESTLERS GO AROUND GRINDING THEIR OWN BEANS?!



OK.

I WANT YOU TO TRY DRAWING IT FOR ME.



WELL, WHAT DO YOU ALL IMAGINE IT LOOKS LIKE?



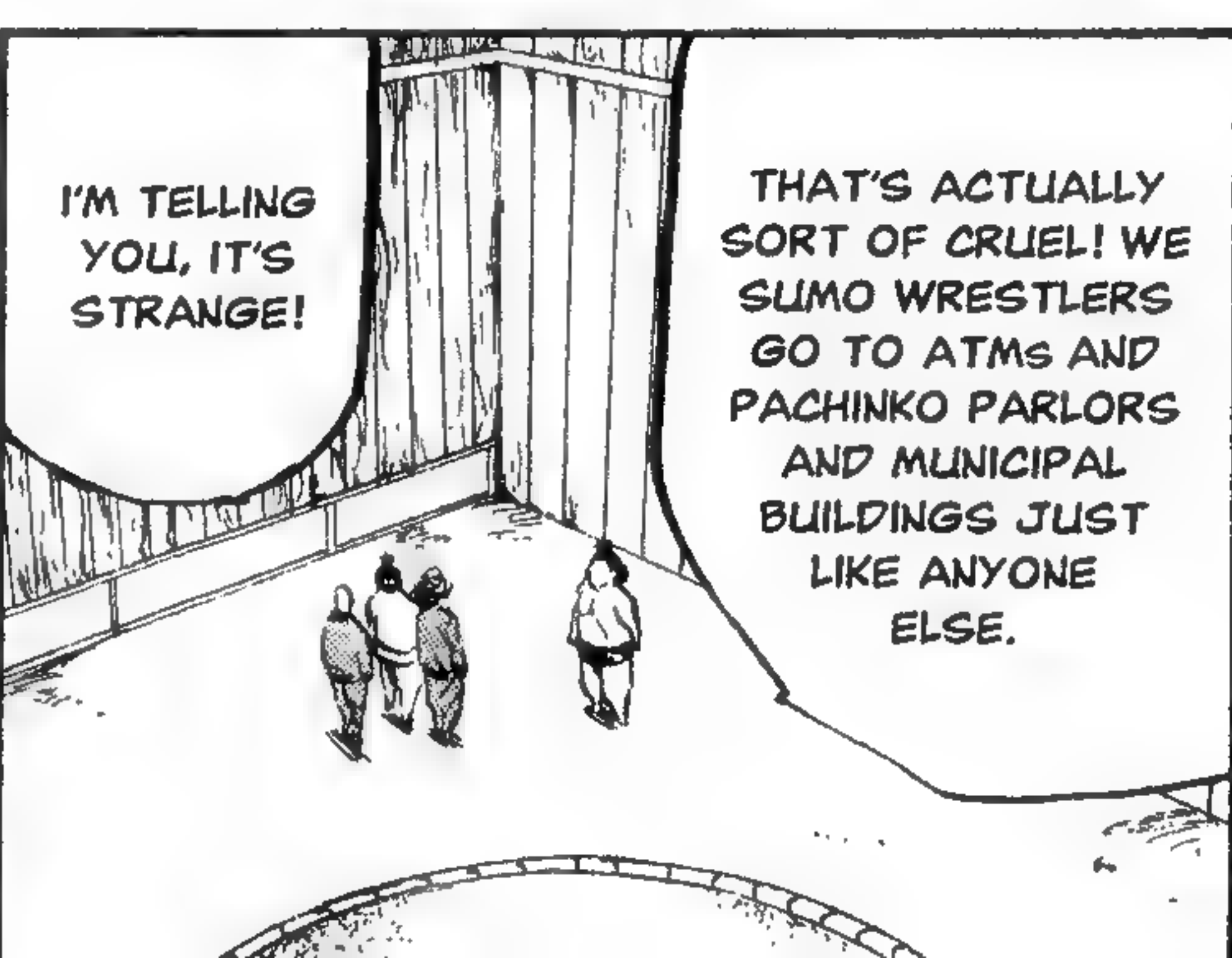
SHOW ME.

I'M FINISHED.



HM? LIKE WHAT?

IF SUMO WRESTLERS STARTED GOING TO COFFEE SHOPS, IT'D BE LIKE THIS!



I'M TELLING YOU, IT'S STRANGE!

THAT'S ACTUALLY SORT OF CRUEL! WE SUMO WRESTLERS GO TO ATMS AND PACHINKO PARLORS AND MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS JUST LIKE ANYONE ELSE.

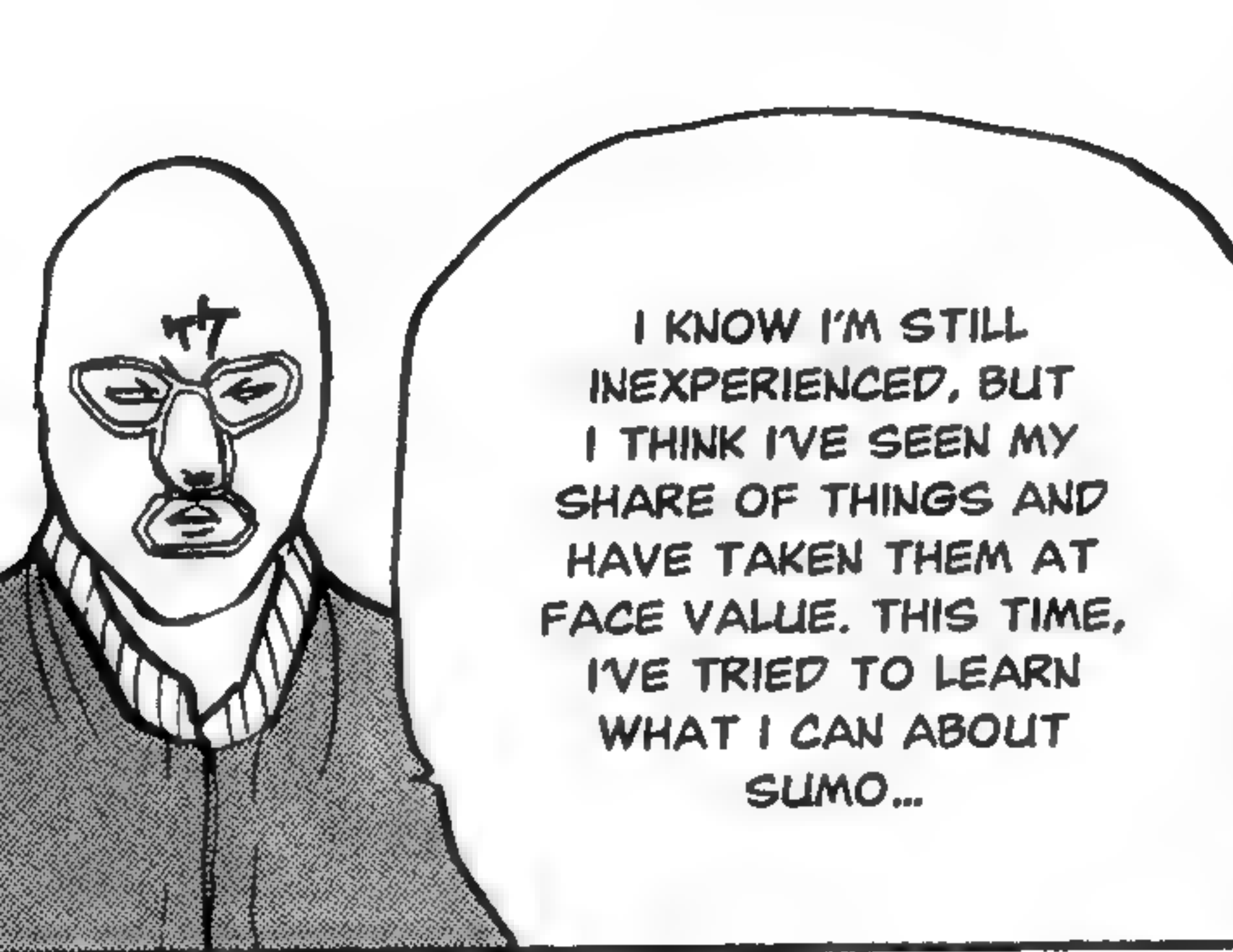


SUMO STABLE

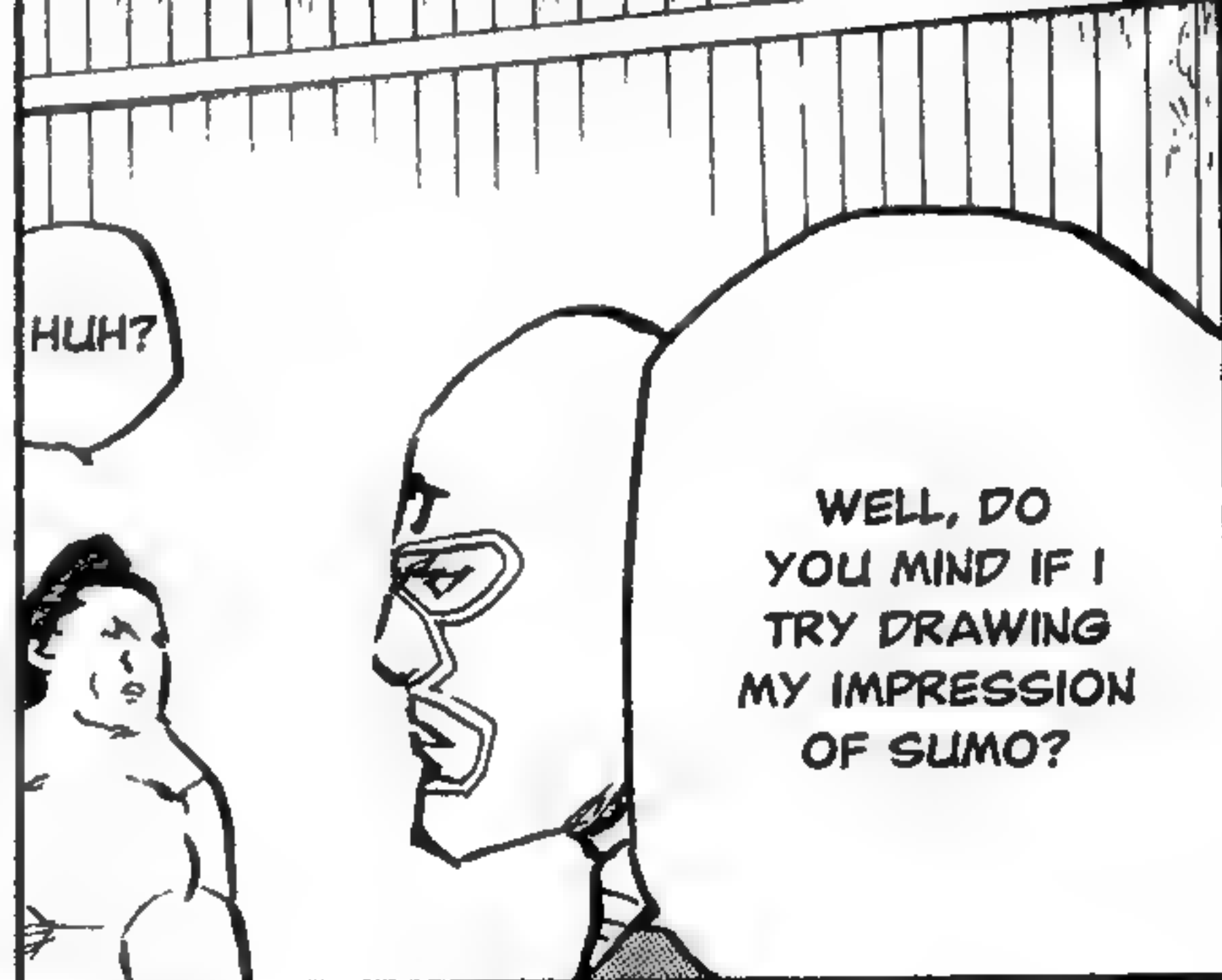
CHANKO

CHANKO RESTAURANT

SUMO STABLE

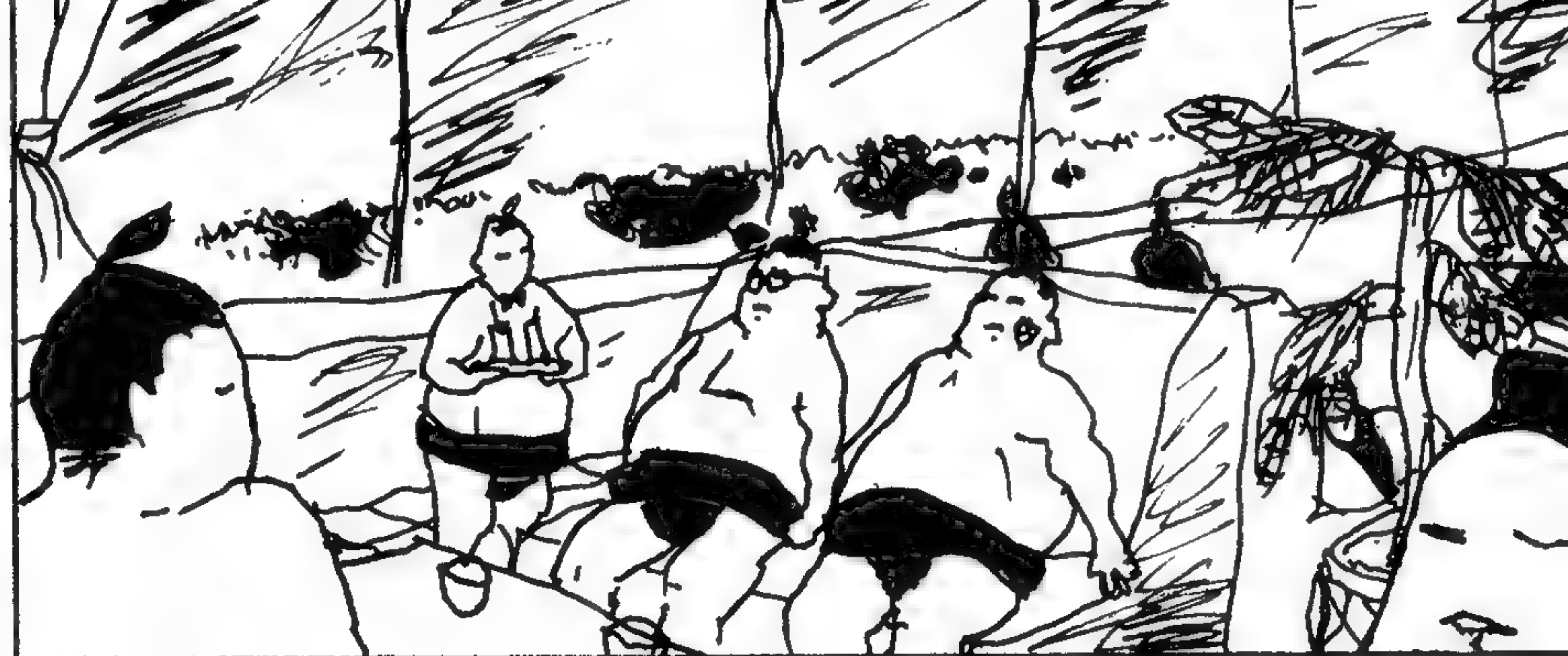


I KNOW I'M STILL
INEXPERIENCED, BUT
I THINK I'VE SEEN MY
SHARE OF THINGS AND
HAVE TAKEN THEM AT
FACE VALUE. THIS TIME,
I'VE TRIED TO LEARN
WHAT I CAN ABOUT
SUMO...



HUH?

WELL, DO
YOU MIND IF I
TRY DRAWING
MY IMPRESSION
OF SUMO?



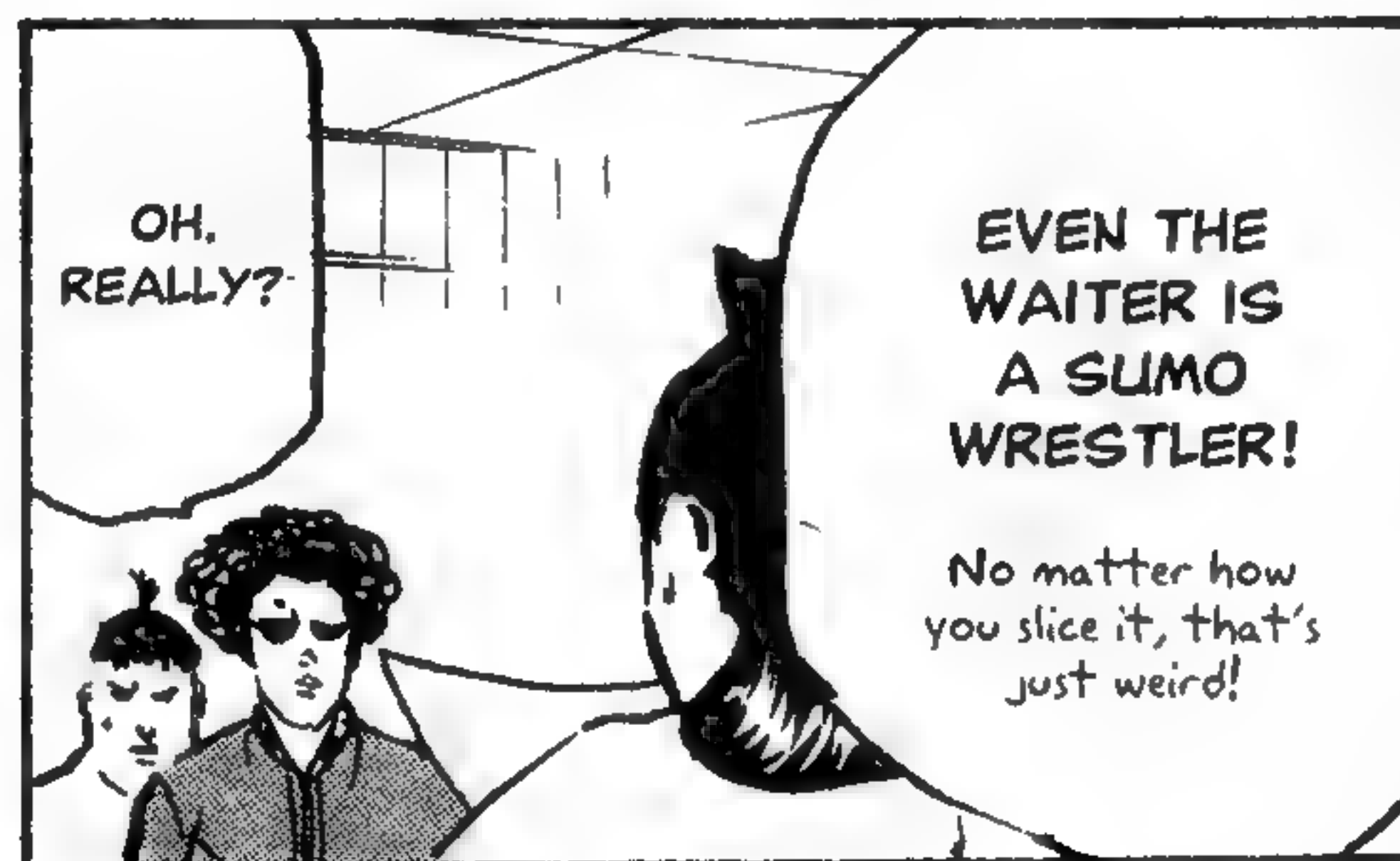
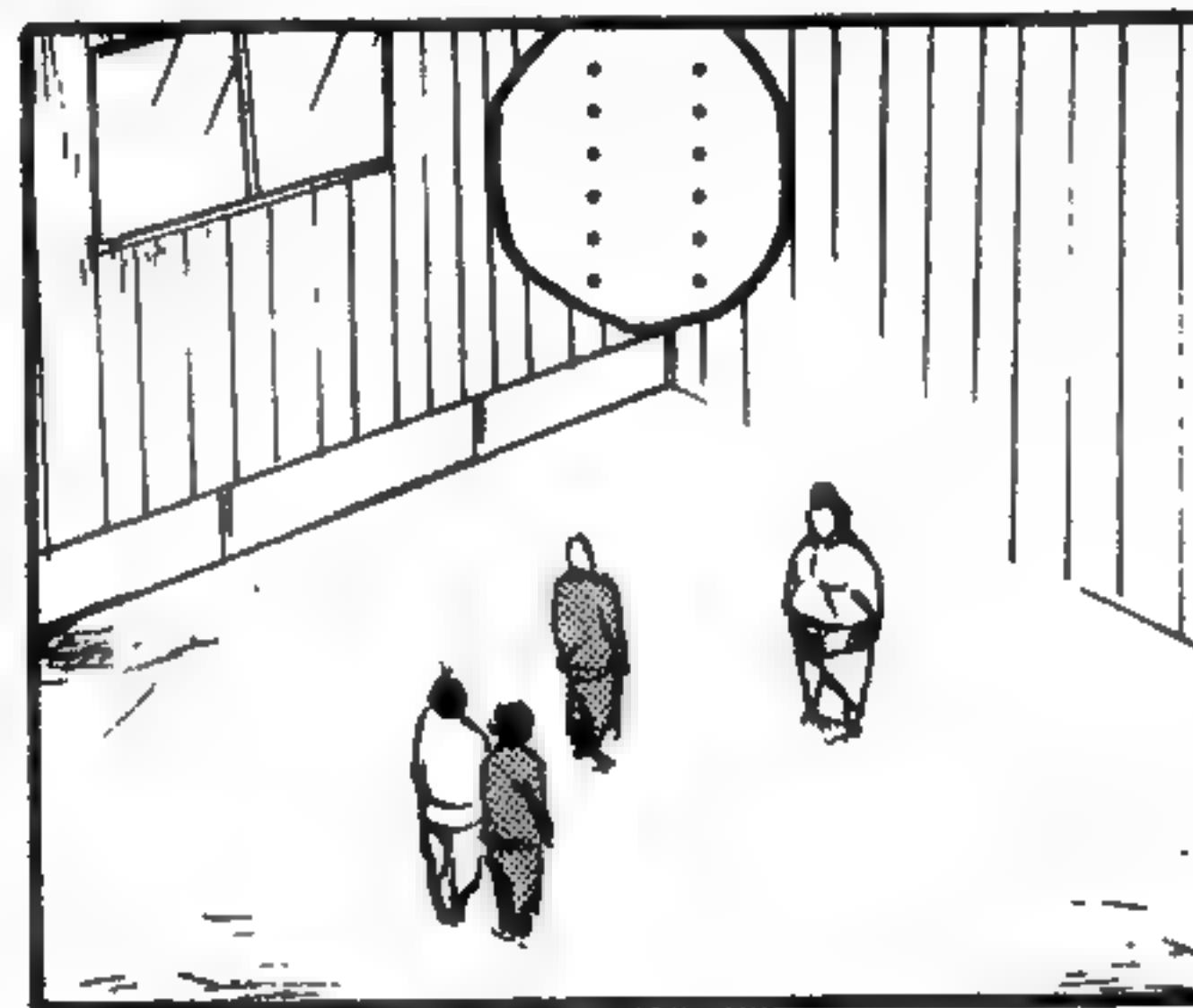
THEY CAN DO OTHER
THINGS...IF YOU THINK
ABOUT IT, OF COURSE
THEY DO! THEY'RE
PEOPLE JUST LIKE US!

AND I THINK THAT
JUST BECAUSE
THEY'RE SUMO
WRESTLERS, THAT
DOESN'T MEAN THEY'RE
ALWAYS WEARING
MAWASHI AND
PRACTICING SUMO!



THANK
YOU.

HMPH.
IT LOOKS LIKE
YOU, AT LEAST,
UNDERSTAND.
THAT MAKES
ME GLAD.



OH,
REALLY?

EVEN THE
WAITER IS
A SUMO
WRESTLER!

No matter how
you slice it, that's
just weird!



LET ME TELL
YOU THE
FIRST THING
THAT'S WEIRD
ABOUT THIS
PICTURE...



EVEN I SORT OF
SUSPECTED THAT
RYOGOKU MIGHT BE
MORE ORDINARY THAN
PEOPLE THINK...

THESE
IDEAS OF
YOURS ARE
WAY OFF!

ANYWAY,
WHEN WE'RE
WALKING AROUND
OUTSIDE, WE
PUT ON LIGHT
KIMONOS,
RIGHT?!



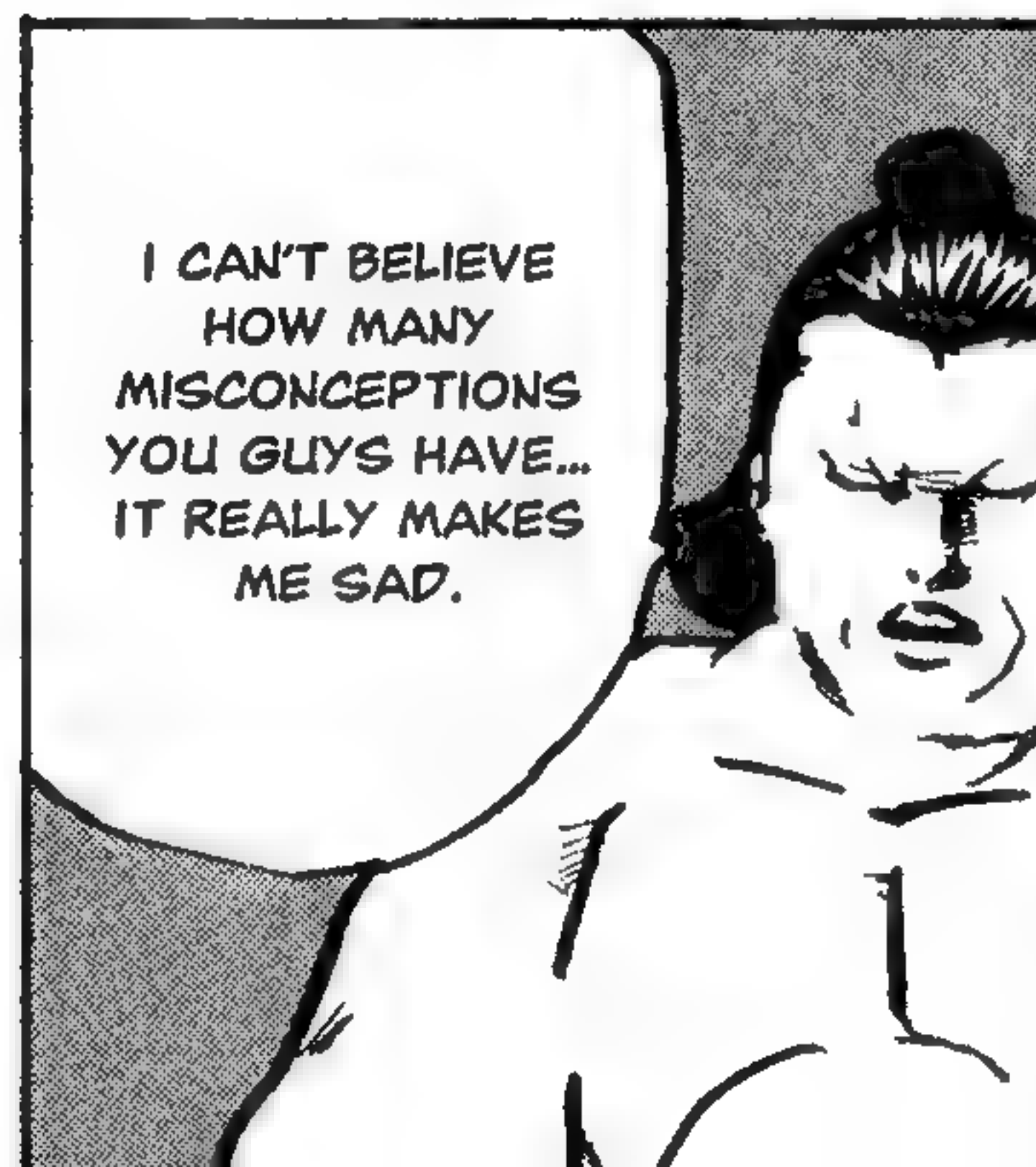
LET ME
SEE.

I'M
DONE!



OK!

SURE, GO
AHEAD AND
DRAW YOUR
IMPRESSIONS
OF SUMO.



I CAN'T BELIEVE
HOW MANY
MISCONCEPTIONS
YOU GUYS HAVE...
IT REALLY MAKES
ME SAD.



WHAT
THE HELL
KIND OF
"ADORA-
TION" IS
THAT?!

BUT EVERY TIME I
THINK ABOUT THAT,
MY ADORATION
CRUMBLES AND
I CAN'T GET TO
SLEEP AT NIGHT.

The head of the Cromartie Sumo Club. He's probably 18. (LOL) He's so reserved and acts like such an adult that if he's not lucky, he's liable to give the impression that he's over 40. He appears to be quite skilled at sumo. I basically included this character on a whim, but ended up using him for quite a long time. Too long, probably, yet he's still not popular. (LOL) But using a character like that is what *Cromartie* is all about.

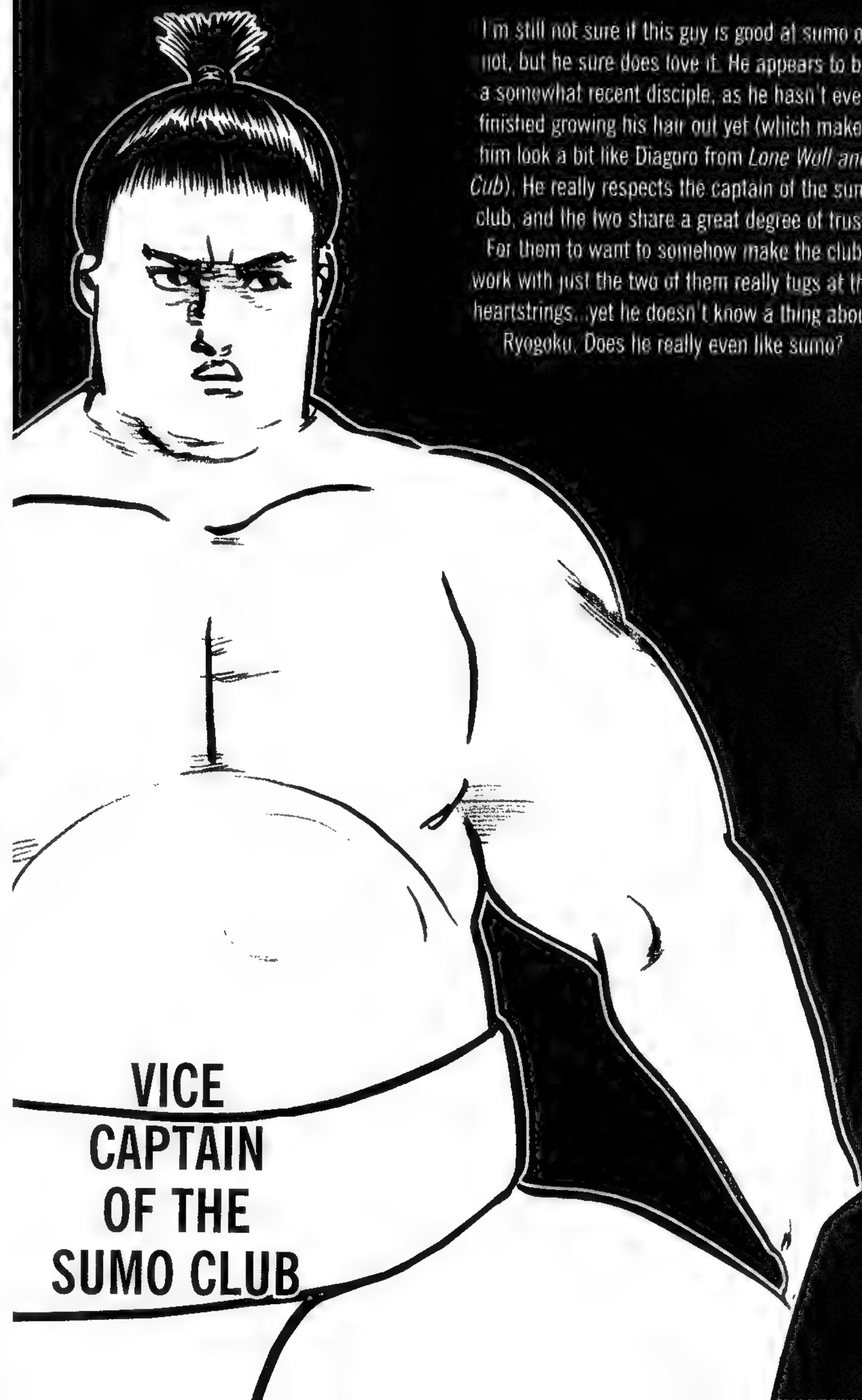
CHARACTER
INTRODUCTION

CAPTAIN
OF THE
SUMO CLUB



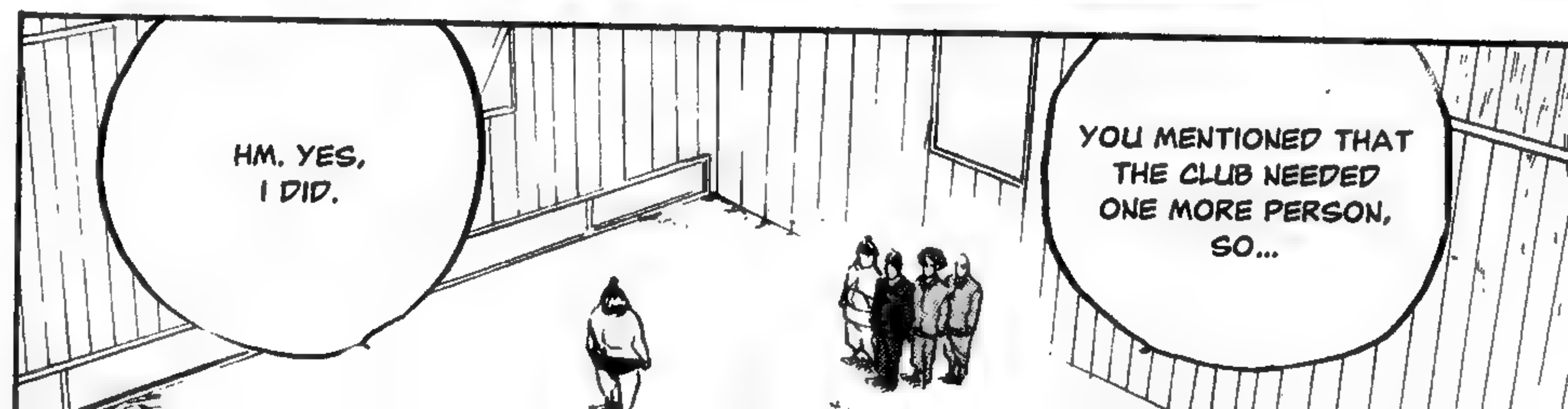
BUT HE WAS CLOSE.

CHAPTER 246: **WIDTH OF A CIRCLE**



I'm still not sure if this guy is good at sumo or not, but he sure does love it. He appears to be a somewhat recent disciple, as he hasn't even finished growing his hair out yet (which makes him look a bit like Diagono from *Lone Wolf and Cub*). He really respects the captain of the sumo club, and the two share a great degree of trust. For them to want to somehow make the club work with just the two of them really tugs at the heartstrings...yet he doesn't know a thing about Ryogoku. Does he really even like sumo?

CHARACTER
INTRODUCTION





UH, I DON'T KNOW THAT I'D CALL SUMO A TRADITIONAL PERFORMING ART...

I HAVE ALWAYS BELIEVED THAT, AS ONE OF THE TRADITIONAL PERFORMING ARTS, SUMO IS ESSENTIAL TO THE PRESERVATION OF OUR NATION'S CULTURE.



TRUE ENOUGH.

AND THIS GUY BARELY JOINED TODAY.

BUT WE'RE STILL AMATEURS. FOR US TO SUDDENLY GO COMPETING IN A NATIONAL TOURNAMENT...



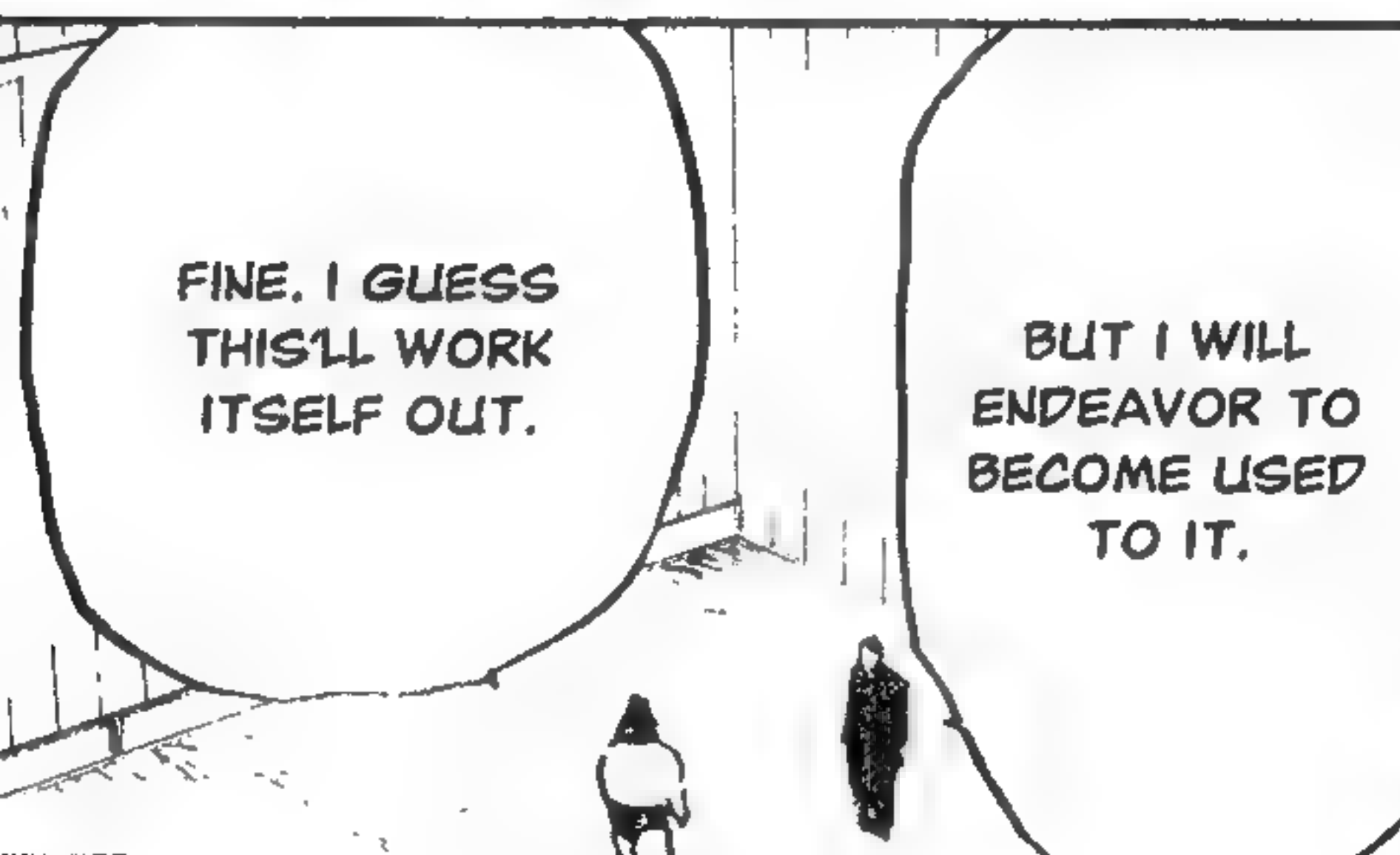
WHAT?! WHAT IS EVERYONE'S PROBLEM WITH THE MAWASHI?!

I WOULDN'T SAY THAT'S ENTIRELY ACCURATE.



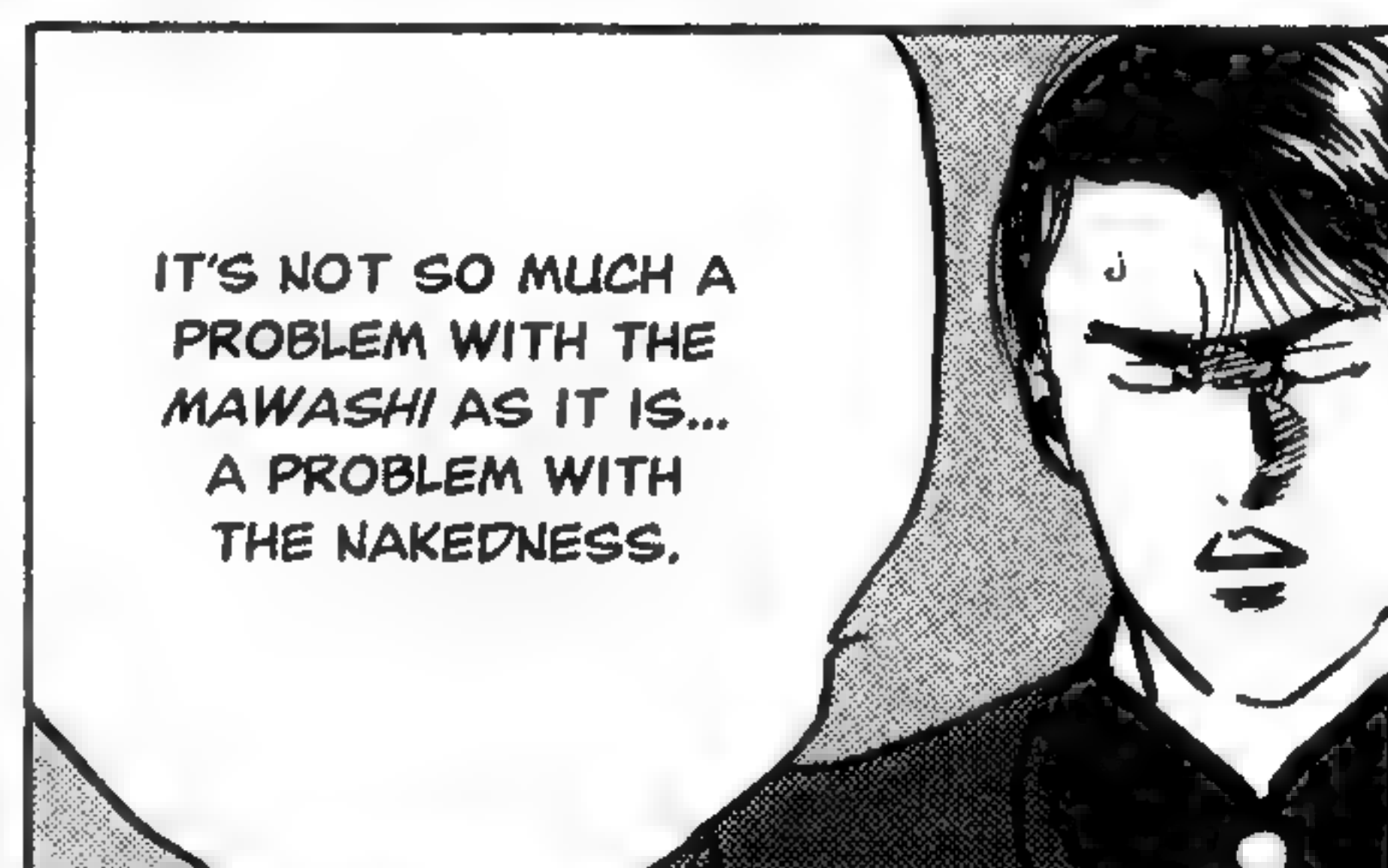
AT LEAST YOU'LL BE ABLE TO WEAR A MAWASHI WITHOUT ANY PROBLEMS.

WHAT-EVER.



FINE. I GUESS THIS'LL WORK ITSELF OUT.

BUT I WILL ENDEAVOR TO BECOME USED TO IT.



IT'S NOT SO MUCH A PROBLEM WITH THE MAWASHI AS IT IS... A PROBLEM WITH THE NAKEDNESS.



DON'T WORRY. I'VE ALREADY PREPARED FOR THIS.

DON'T YOU THINK WE MIGHT NEED A LITTLE MORE EXPERIENCE?

BUT SIR, ENTERING THE ALL-JAPAN COMPETITION LIKE THIS...



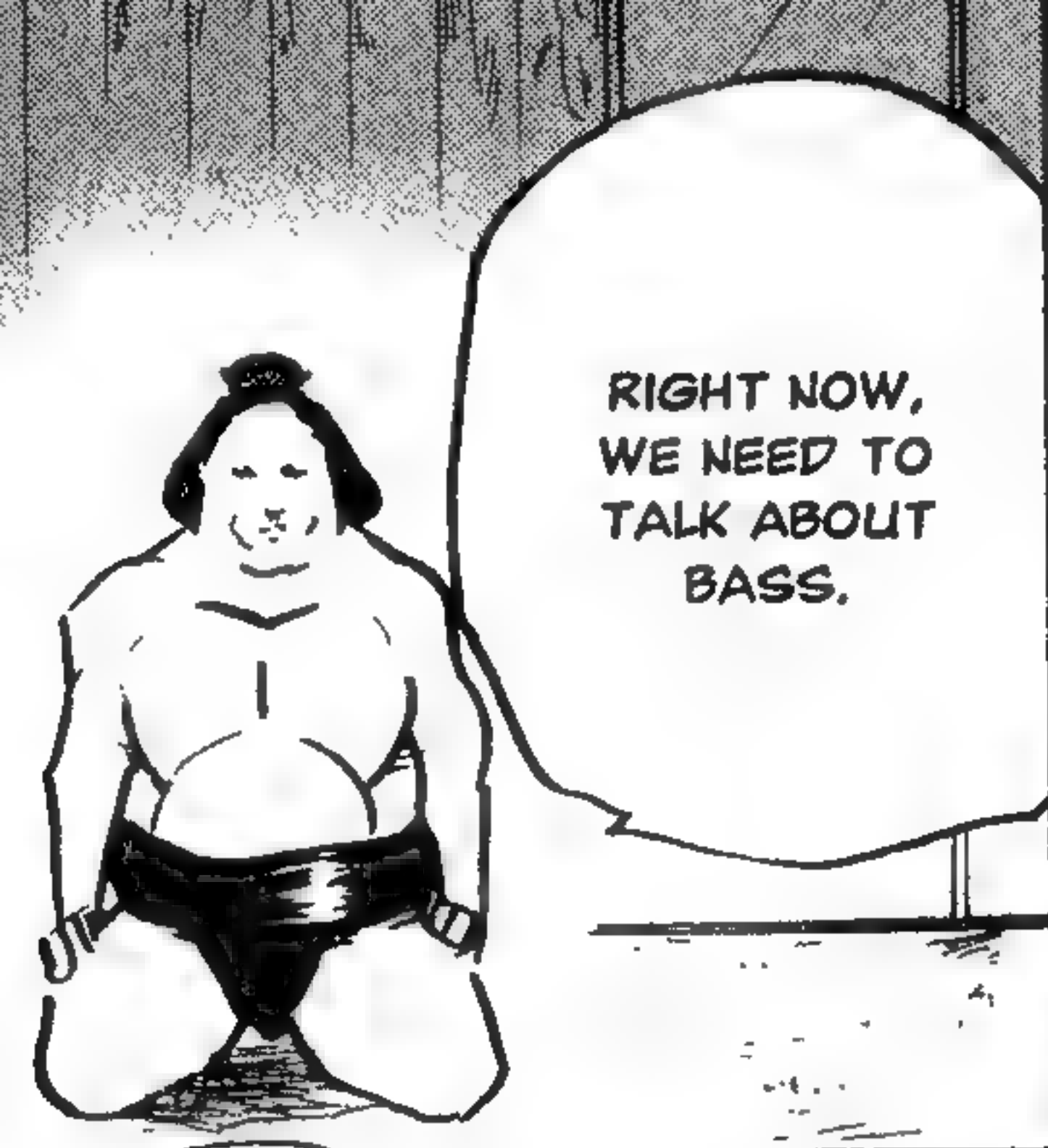
YES, SIR. I'VE HAD AN INTEREST IN SUMO FOR QUITE SOME TIME.

KAMIYAMA-KUN, YOU HAVE THAT KIND OF SPIRIT, RIGHT? THAT'S WHY YOU DECIDED TO JOIN OUR CLUB.



THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS ARE SPIRIT AND DETERMINATION!

LISTEN, IF YOU'RE GOING TO BE SCARED JUST BECAUSE YOU'RE A BEGINNER, YOU'LL NEVER AMOUNT TO ANYTHING!



RIGHT NOW,
WE NEED TO
TALK ABOUT
BASS.



YOU CAN
EXPLAIN
LATER.

IN THE
SUMO WORLD,
"CHANKO" JUST
MEANS FOOD.
IT--



SOME PLACE
CALLED BASS.

A PRACTICE
COM-
PETITION?!
WHAT'S THE
OTHER HIGH
SCHOOL?



I'VE ARRANGED
A PRACTICE
COMPETITION WITH
ANOTHER HIGH
SCHOOL.

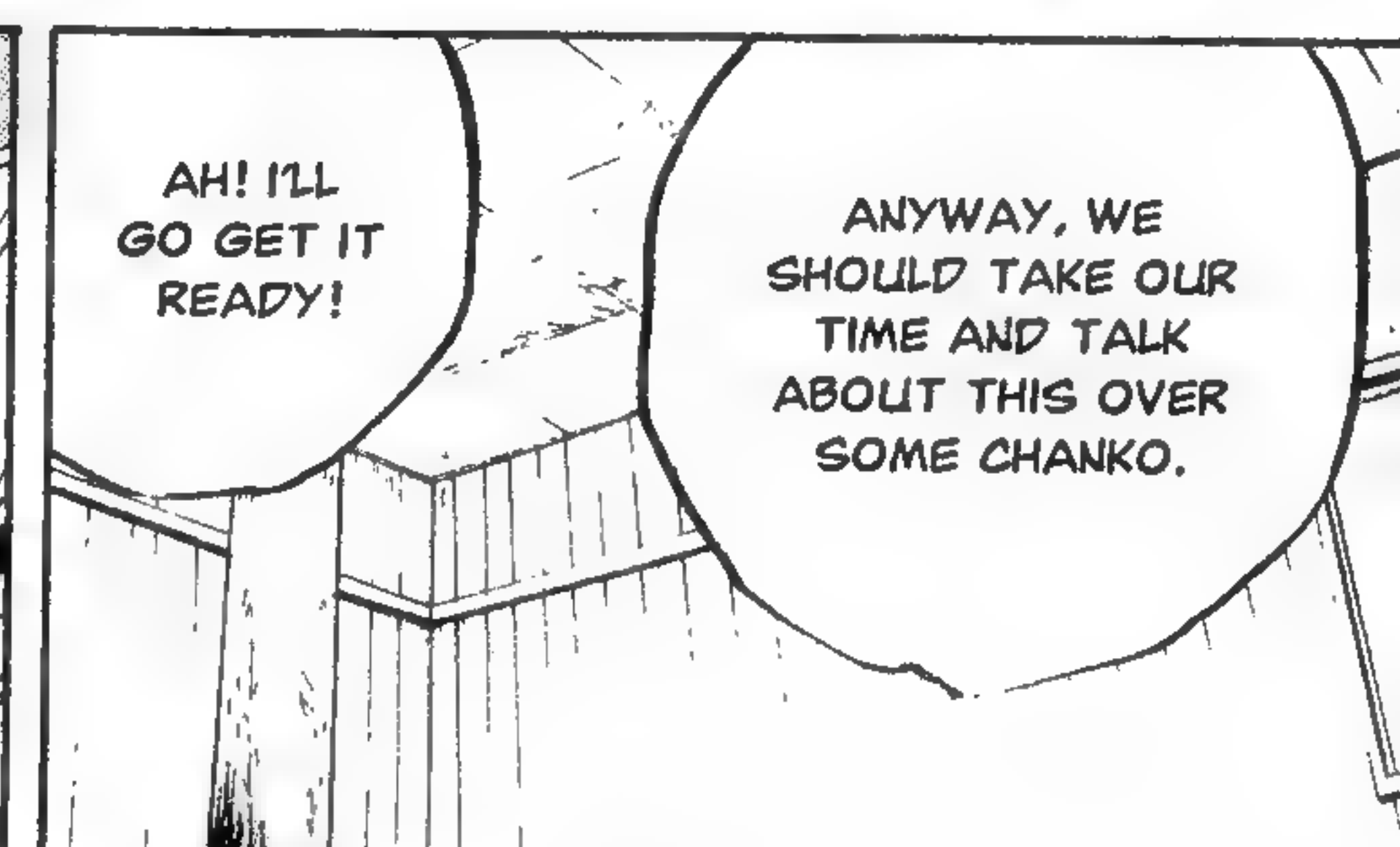
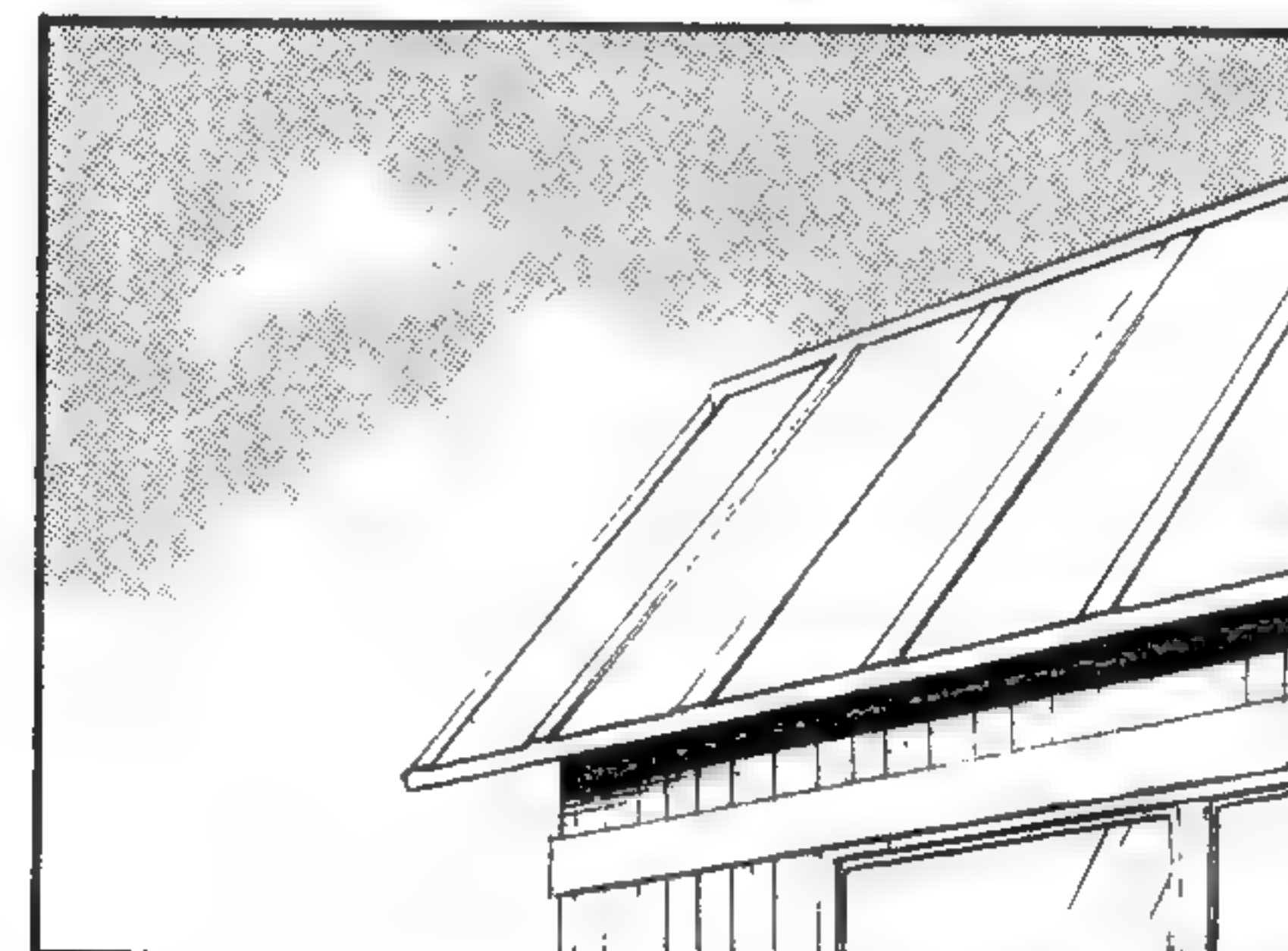


THEY'RE AMONG
THE BEST OF THE
BEST. IN ALL-TOKYO
COMPETITIONS,
BASS IS ALWAYS IN
THE TOP EIGHT.



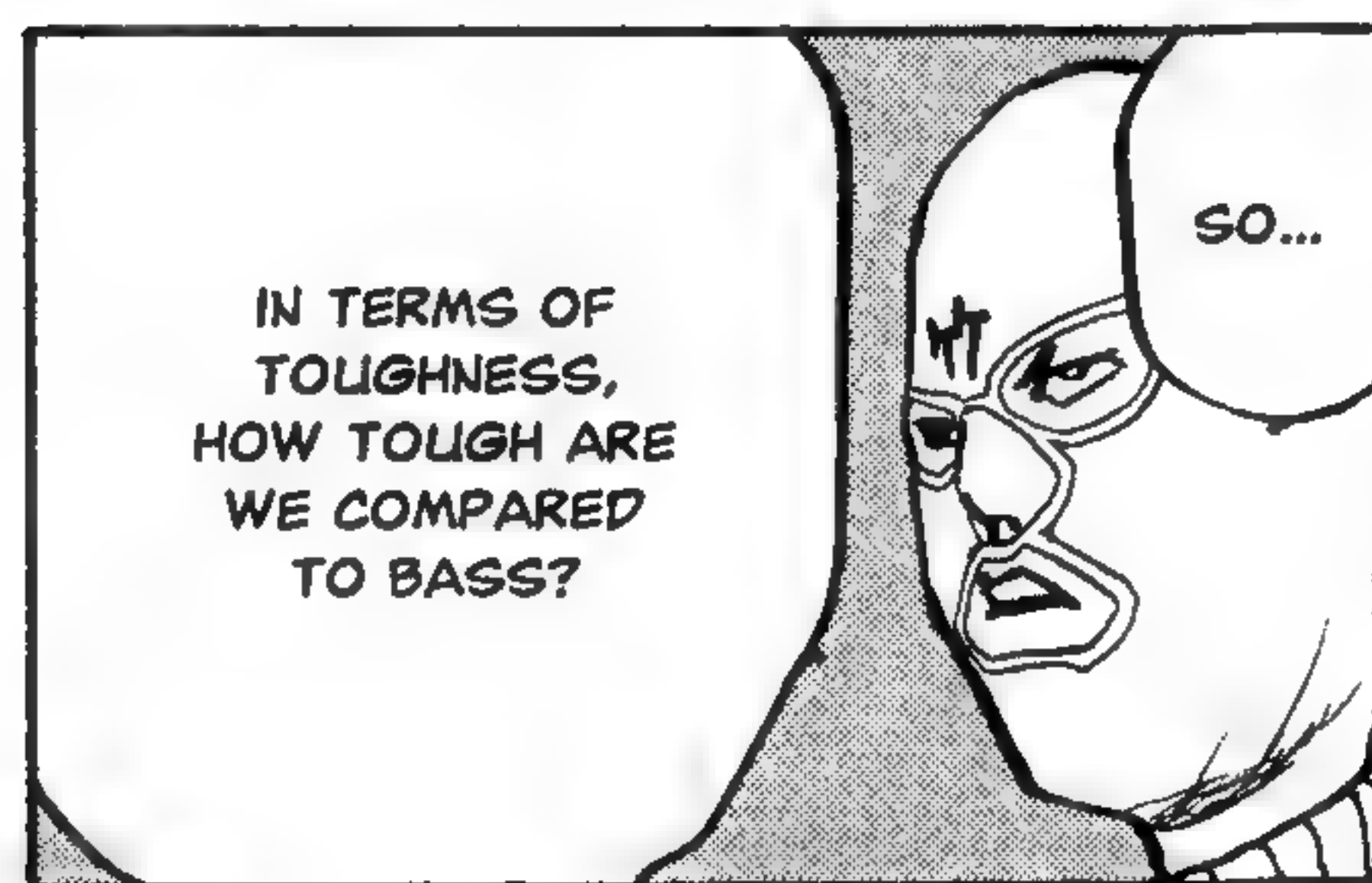
YES,
THEY
HAVE
GOOD
SUMO.

SO, DO
THEY
HAVE
GOOD
SUMO?



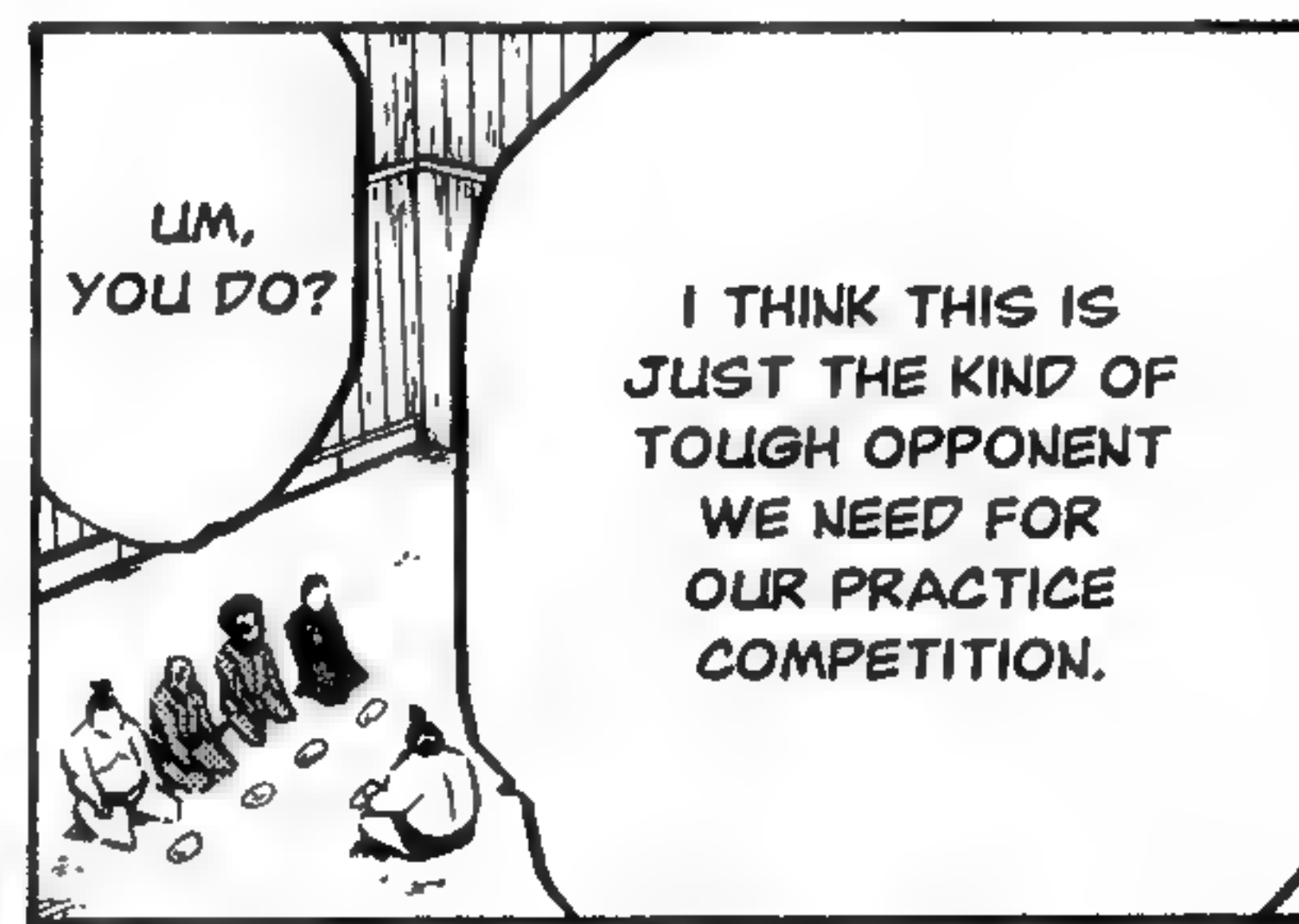
AH! I'LL
GO GET IT
READY!

ANYWAY, WE
SHOULD TAKE OUR
TIME AND TALK
ABOUT THIS OVER
SOME CHANKO.



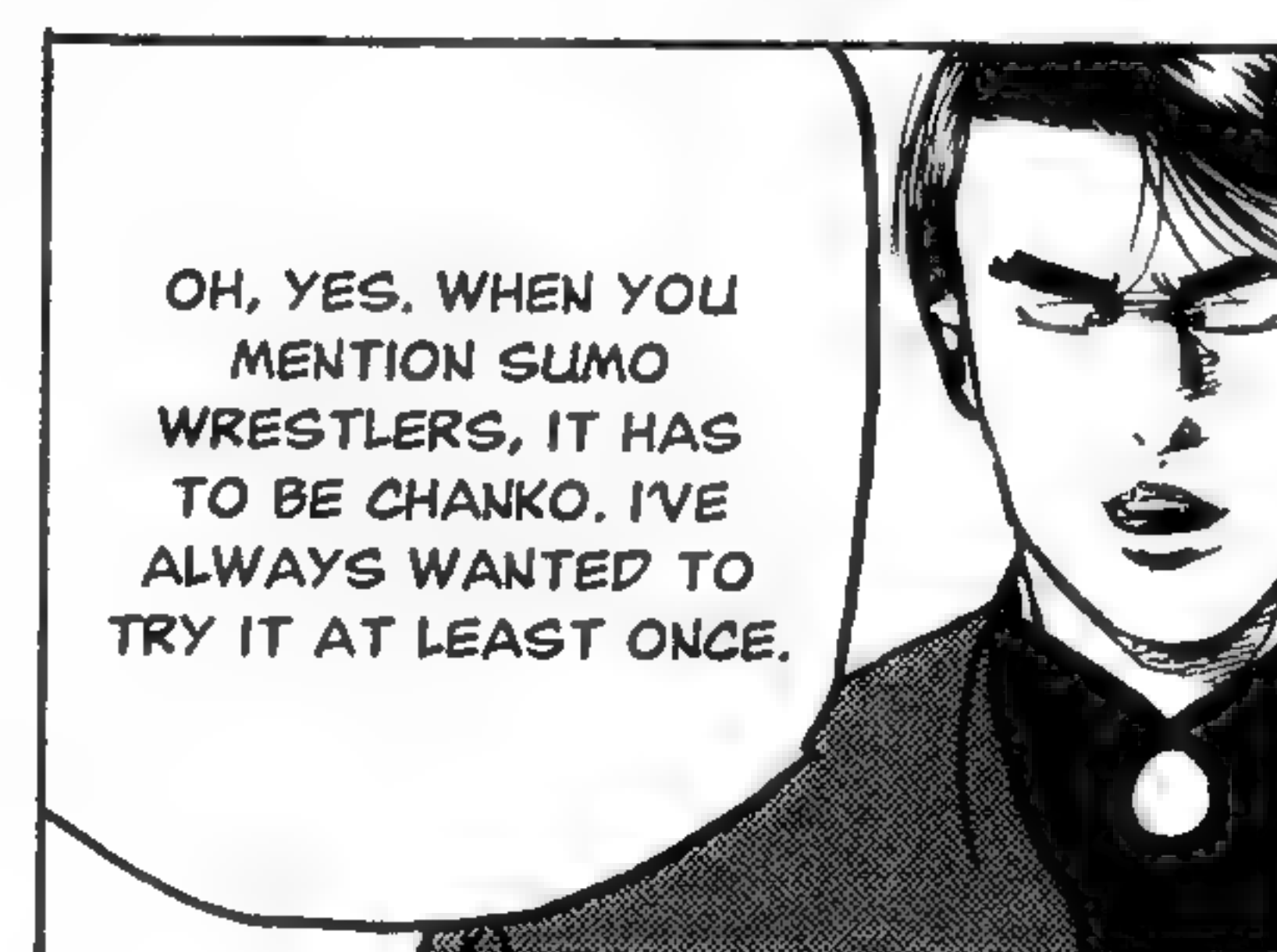
IN TERMS OF
TOUGHNESS,
HOW TOUGH ARE
WE COMPARED
TO BASS?

SO...



UM,
YOU DO?

I THINK THIS IS
JUST THE KIND OF
TOUGH OPPONENT
WE NEED FOR
OUR PRACTICE
COMPETITION.

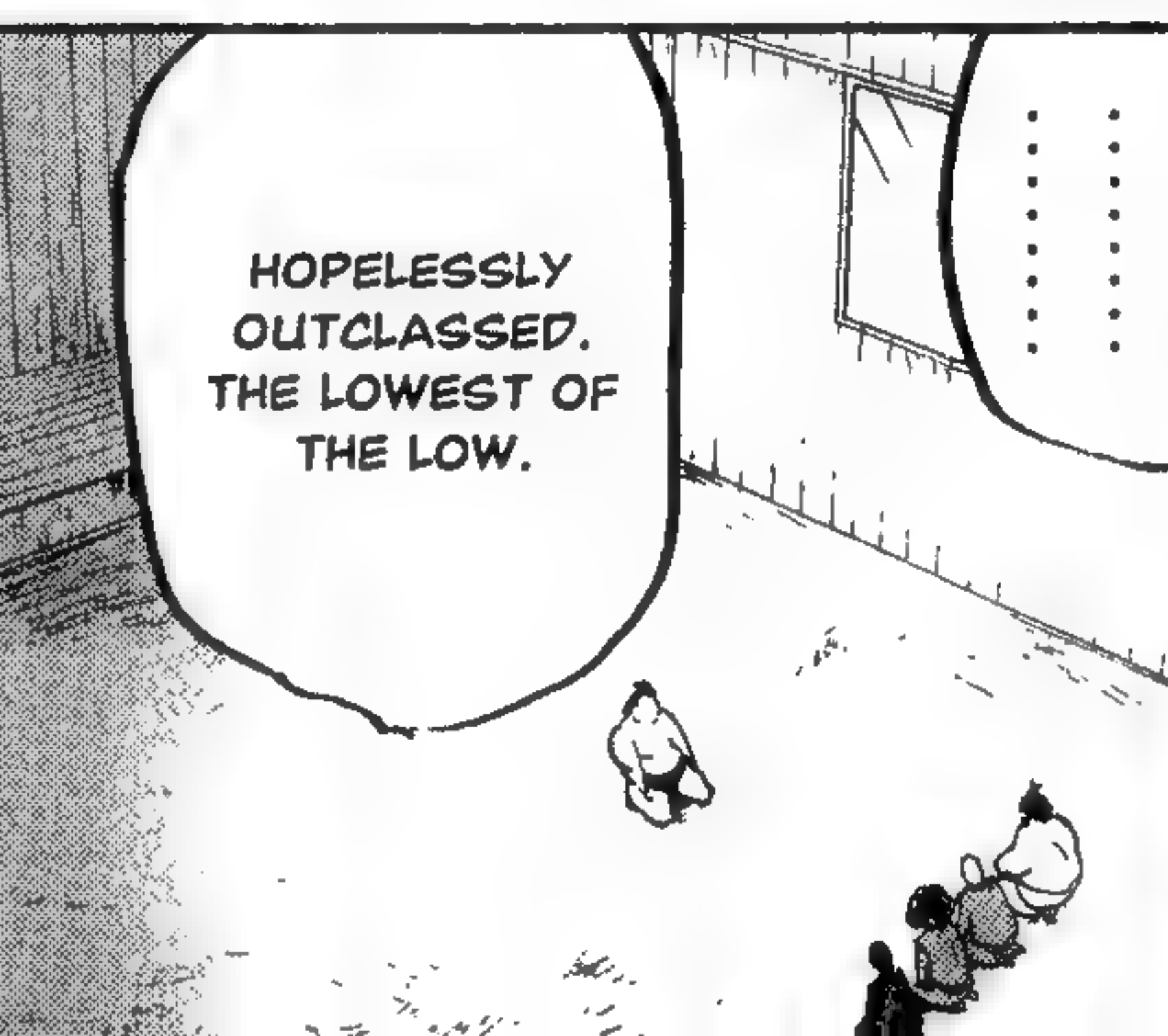


OH, YES. WHEN YOU
MENTION SUMO
WRESTLERS, IT HAS
TO BE CHANKO. I'VE
ALWAYS WANTED TO
TRY IT AT LEAST ONCE.



REALLY?

I'M QUITE
LOOKING
FORWARD
TO THIS. I'VE
NEVER EATEN
CHANKO
BEFORE.



HOPELESSLY
OUTCLASSED.
THE LOWEST OF
THE LOW.



WEAK.



YOU DON'T
KNOW
ANYTHING,
DO YOU?

HEY,
THIS IS
CURRY!

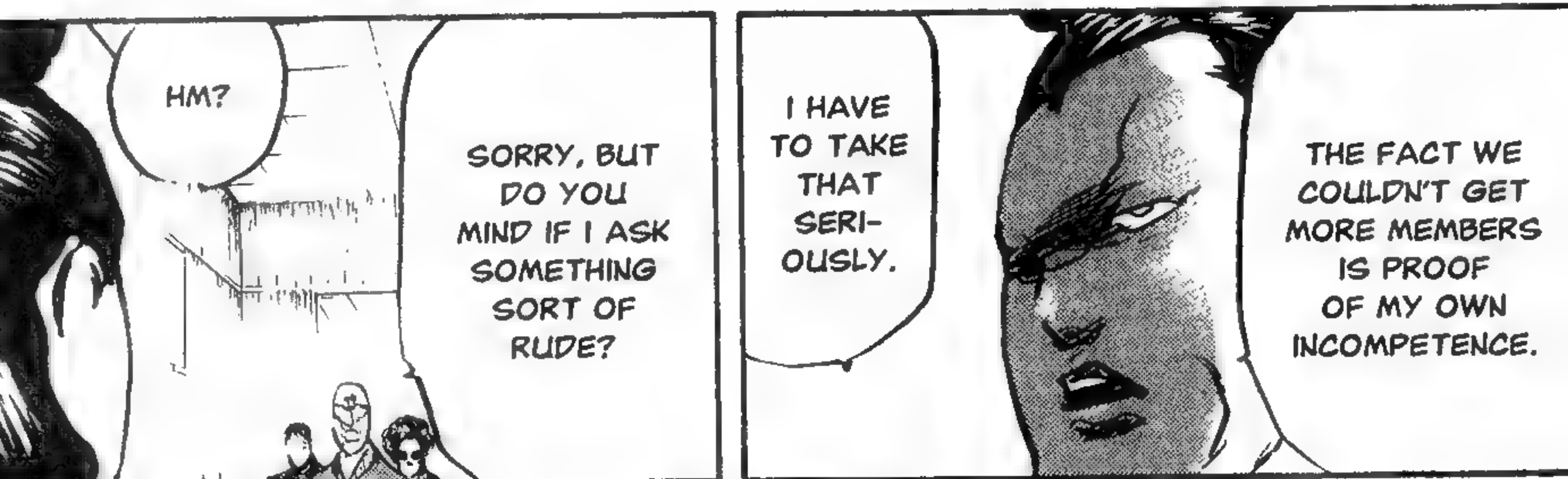


I SAID THAT'S ENOUGH.

OUR CAPTAIN IS REALLY TOUGH! IF THE CLUB HAD MORE MEMBERS, WE WOULD'VE--

THE TRUTH IS...

THE TRUTH IS...



HM?

SORRY, BUT DO YOU MIND IF I ASK SOMETHING SORT OF RUDE?

I HAVE TO TAKE THAT SERIOUSLY.

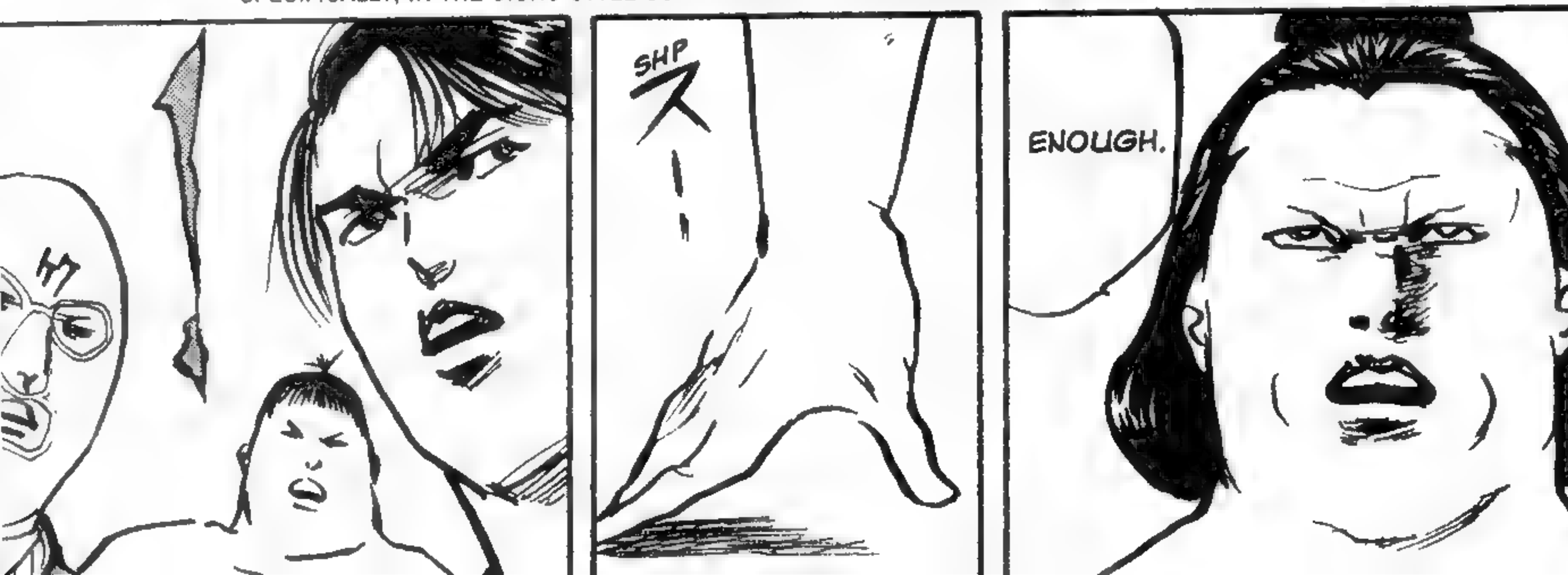
THE FACT WE COULDN'T GET MORE MEMBERS IS PROOF OF MY OWN INCOMPETENCE.



BASTARD! YOU SAY ONE MORE THING LIKE THAT AND YOU'VE HAD IT!

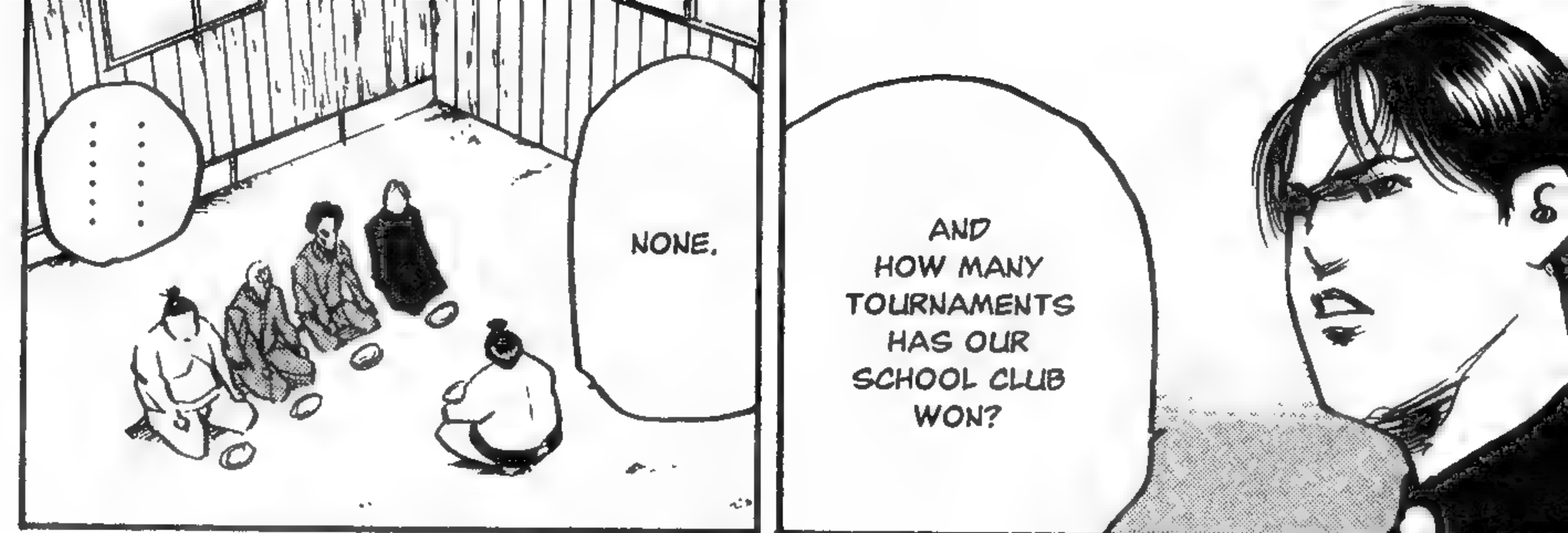
IF YOU'VE NEVER EVEN BEEN IN A TOURNAMENT, I'M NOT SURE YOU SHOULD BE WEARING YOUR HAIR* LIKE THAT...

*SPECIFICALLY, IN THE OICHO STYLE USED BY WRESTLERS IN EITHER OF THE TOP TWO PROFESSIONAL DIVISIONS.



SHP

ENOUGH.



NONE.

AND HOW MANY TOURNAMENTS HAS OUR SCHOOL CLUB WON?



YOU MEAN...

HUH?

NONE.



THEN HOW MANY TIMES HAVE WE LOST?



SHUT UP! JUST SHUT UP!



THAT'S HOW BAD THINGS HAVE BEEN?

HUH?!

YES. WE'VE NEVER ENTERED A TOURNAMENT.



COME ON, STOP. THAT'S ENOUGH.

BEFORE I JOINED, THE CAPTAIN WAS RUNNING THE WHOLE CLUB BY HIMSELF!



BUT WHEN I WAS YOUNG, I WAS RAISED FARTHER OUT BY THE COAST.

RIGHT NOW I LIVE IN TOKYO.



IT WAS BACK WHEN I WAS IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL...



THINKING BACK, IT REALLY WAS A HOMELY LITTLE PLACE.

IT WAS A FISHING VILLAGE, SO SMALL THAT THERE WAS PRACTICALLY NOTHING TO IT. THE ONLY THINGS TO DO FOR FUN WERE FISH, PLAY WITH OUR TOPS OR GO SWIMMING IN THE OCEAN.



THE KIND OF DELICIOUS THAT MAKES MEMORIES.

THAT MAKES IT REALLY DELICIOUS...

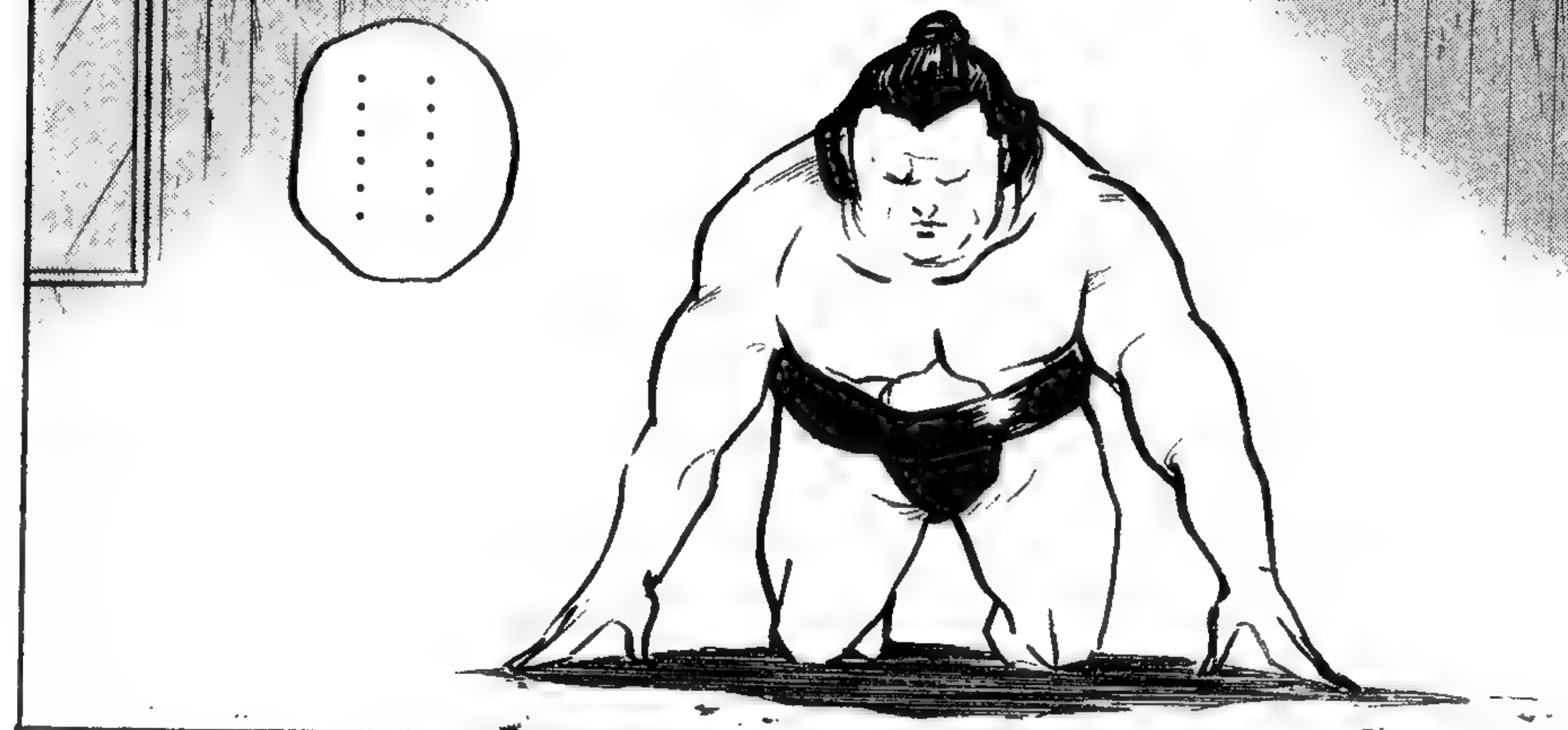


TO GET THE TASTE OUT OF KOMBU, YOU FIRST HAVE TO DRY IT.

THE AREA WAS KNOWN FOR ITS KOMBU SEAWEEED.



HUH?

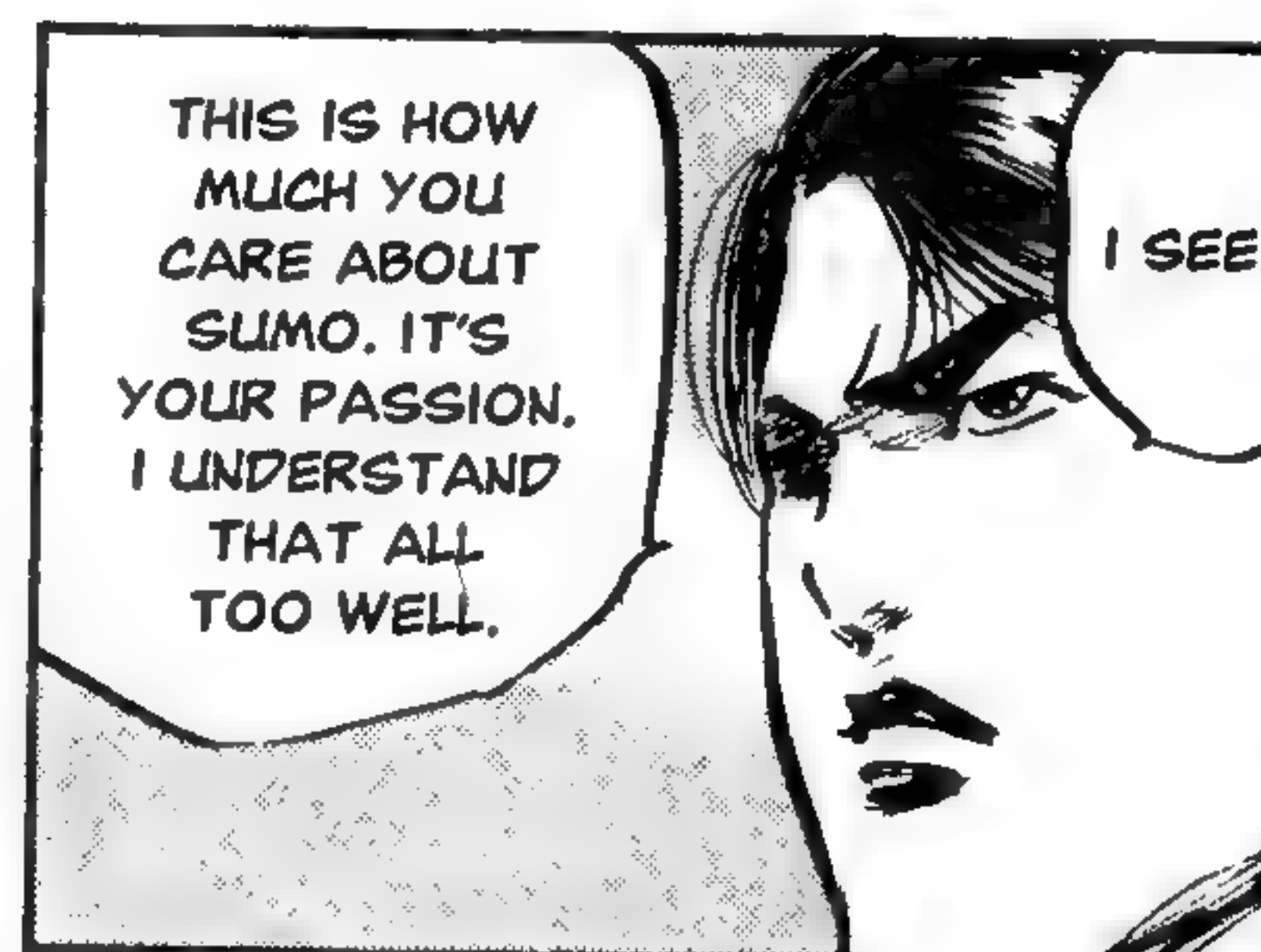


I REALLY APPRECIATE YOU GUYS.

WH-WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

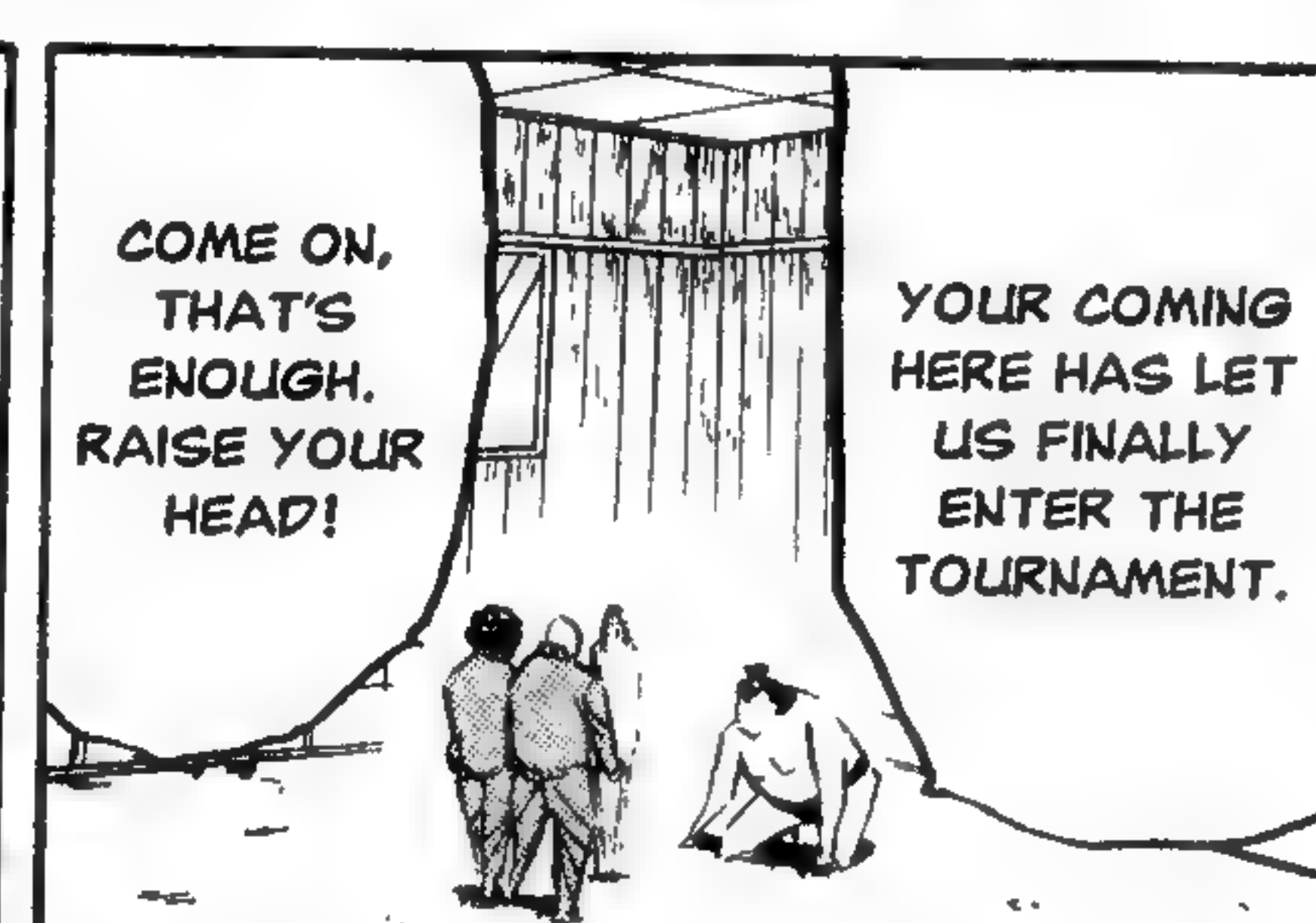


HE'S PROSTRATING HIMSELF!



THIS IS HOW MUCH YOU CARE ABOUT SUMO. IT'S YOUR PASSION. I UNDERSTAND THAT ALL TOO WELL.

I SEE.



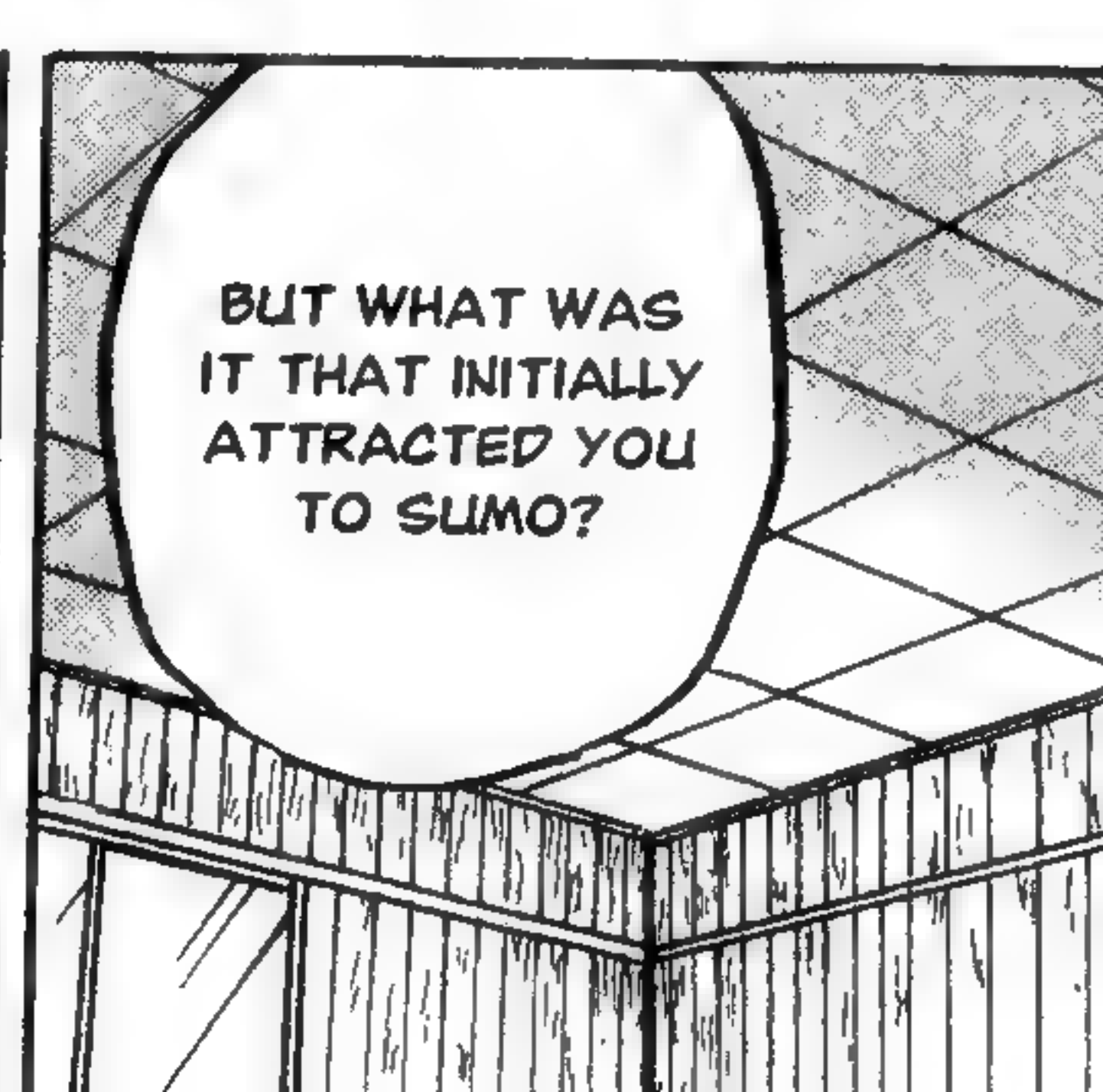
COME ON, THAT'S ENOUGH. RAISE YOUR HEAD!

YOUR COMING HERE HAS LET US FINALLY ENTER THE TOURNAMENT.



FINE.

WOULD YOU PLEASE TELL US?



BUT WHAT WAS IT THAT INITIALLY ATTRACTED YOU TO SUMO?

CHAPTER 247: **SUPER SOUL FIGHTER**

SUMO CLUB

BASS
HIGH
SCHOOL

'SIR!

PUT SOME
MORE ENERGY
INTO IT!

COME ON,
COME ON!

A MAWASHI!

THAT'S
WHEN I
THOUGHT
OF IT...

ONE DAY,
IT HIT ME.

THAT'S
WHAT GOT ME
INTERESTED
IN SUMO.

I THINK
KOMBU'S
BETTER WHEN
YOU JUST
EAT IT.

UH...

LIKE IN SOUPS.



WHO SHOULD I SPEAK TO?

LET'S SEE...

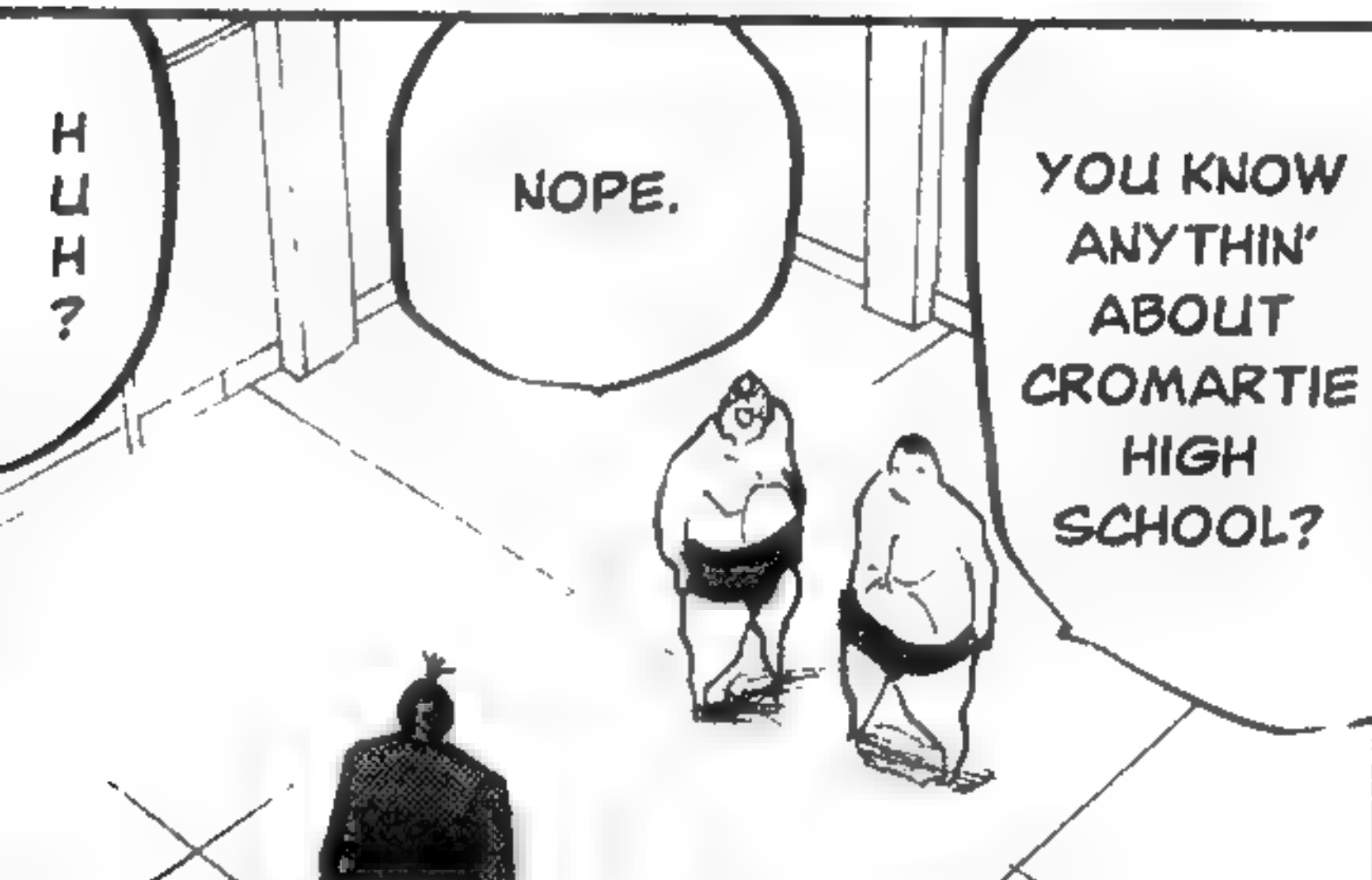


I'M FROM CROMARTIE HIGH SCHOOL. WE MADE AN APPOINTMENT FOR A PRACTICE MATCH TODAY.



YEAH, WHAT?

UM, EXCUSE ME.



HUH?

NOPE.

YOU KNOW ANYTHIN' ABOUT CROMARTIE HIGH SCHOOL?

CRO-MARTIE HIGH SCHOOL?



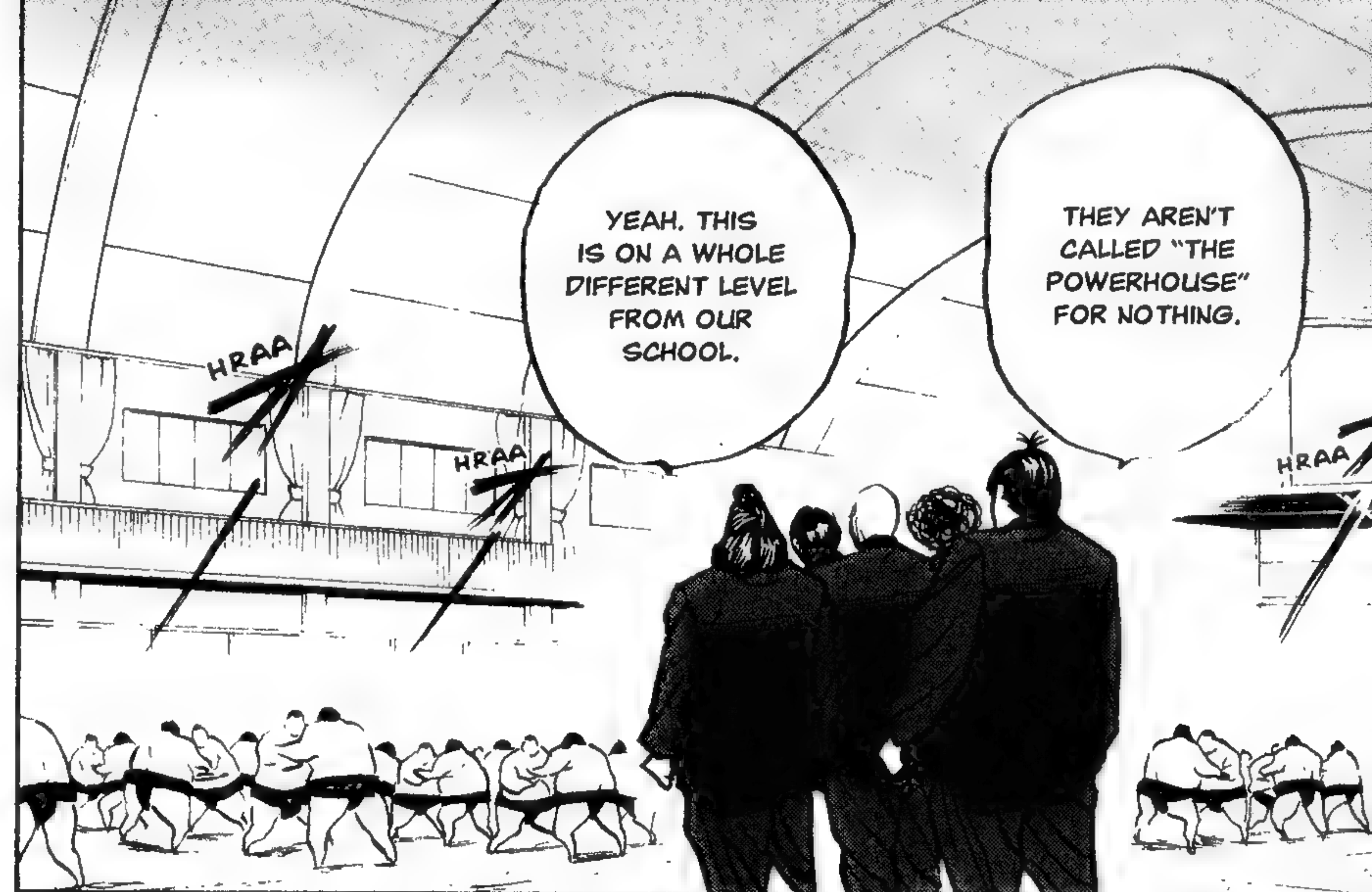
WE CAN'T GO REMEMBERIN' ALL YOU GUYS ONE BY ONE!

THE THING IS, OUR SCHOOL'S SO TOUGH THAT WE GET A LOT OF PEOPLE PUTTIN' IN REQUESTS FOR MATCHES LIKE THIS.



YEAH, WE KNOW THAT.

BUT WE HAVE AN APPOINTMENT FOR A PRACTICE MATCH...



YEAH. THIS IS ON A WHOLE DIFFERENT LEVEL FROM OUR SCHOOL.

THEY AREN'T CALLED "THE POWERHOUSE" FOR NOTHING.



I WANT YOU TO THINK OF TODAY'S PRACTICE MATCH AS A JUNIOR ASKING THE SENIOR TO SPAR.

NOW LISTEN.



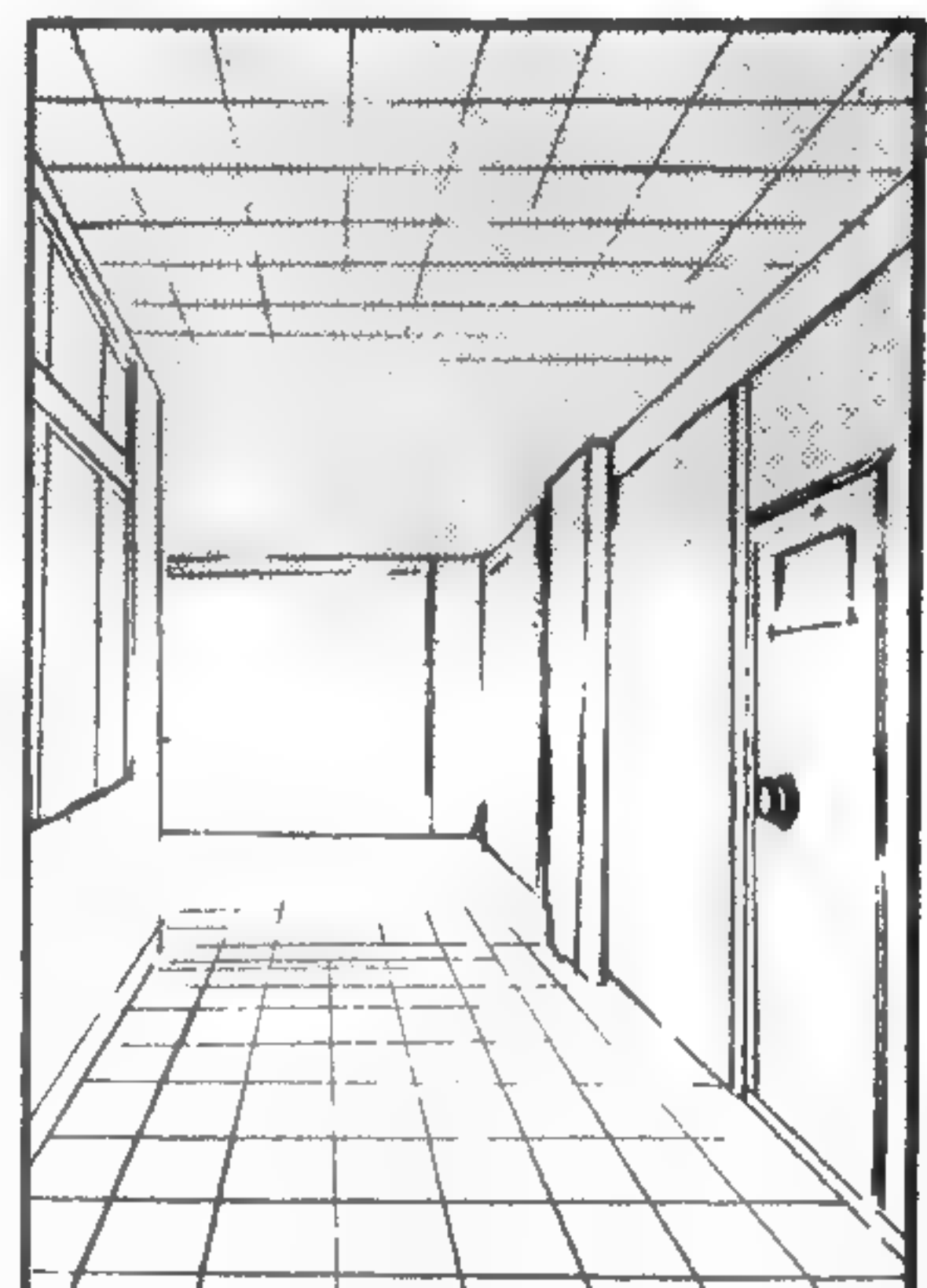
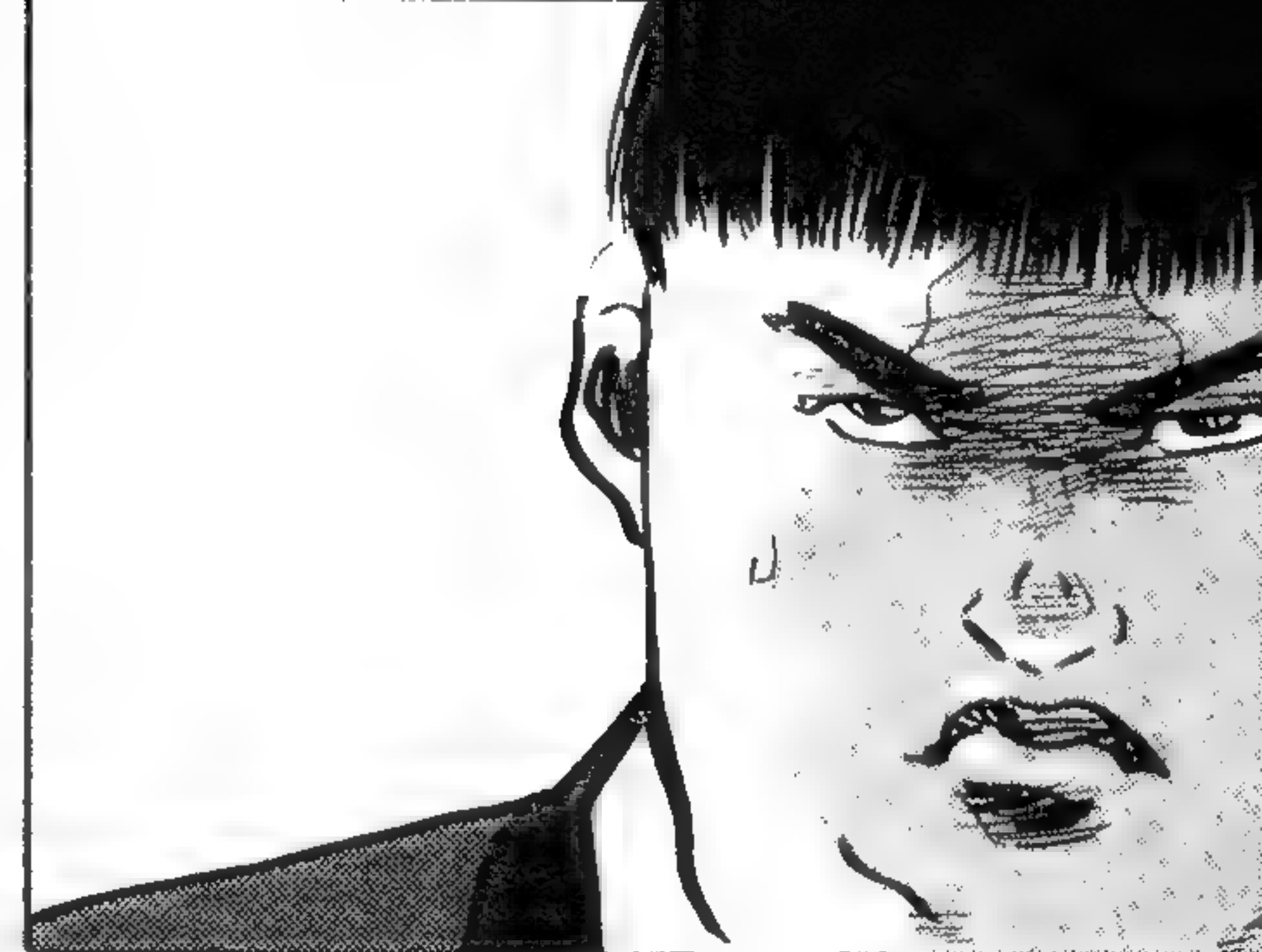
YES, PLEASE DO.

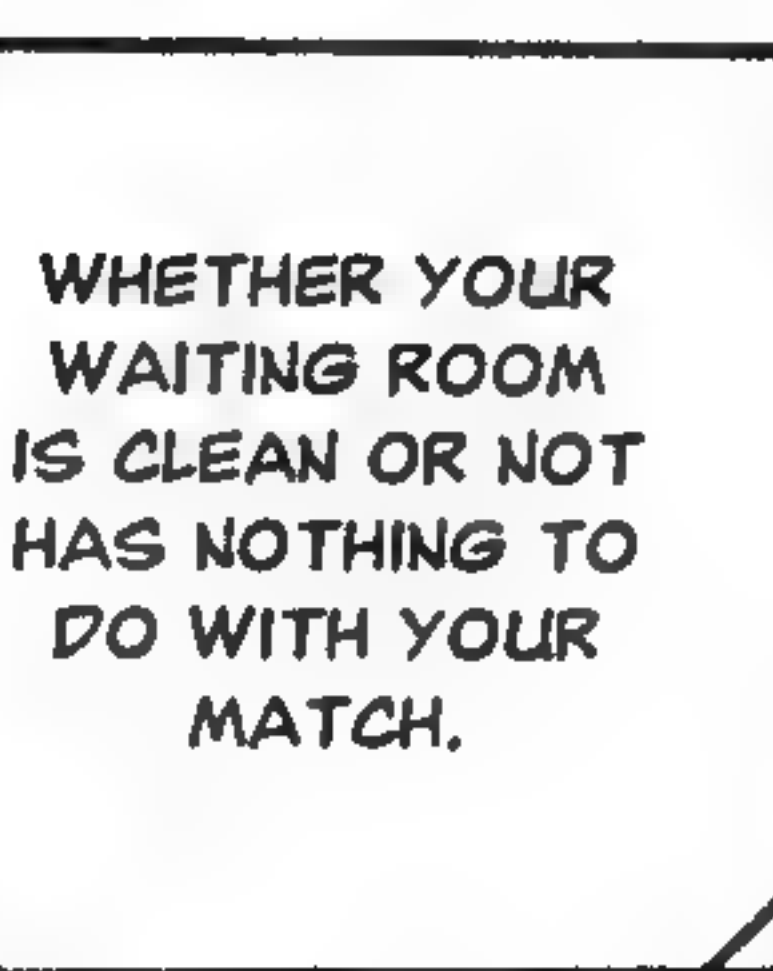
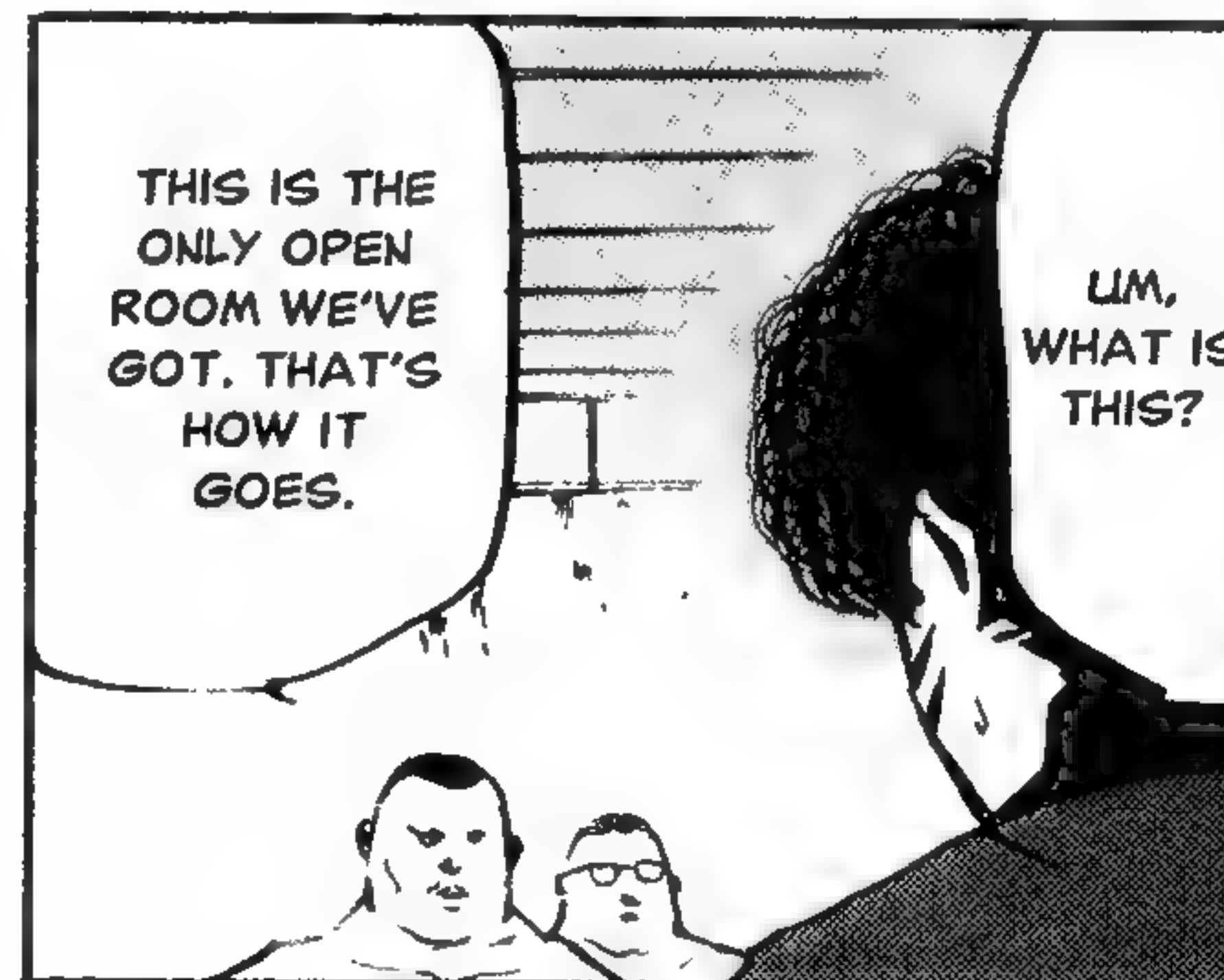
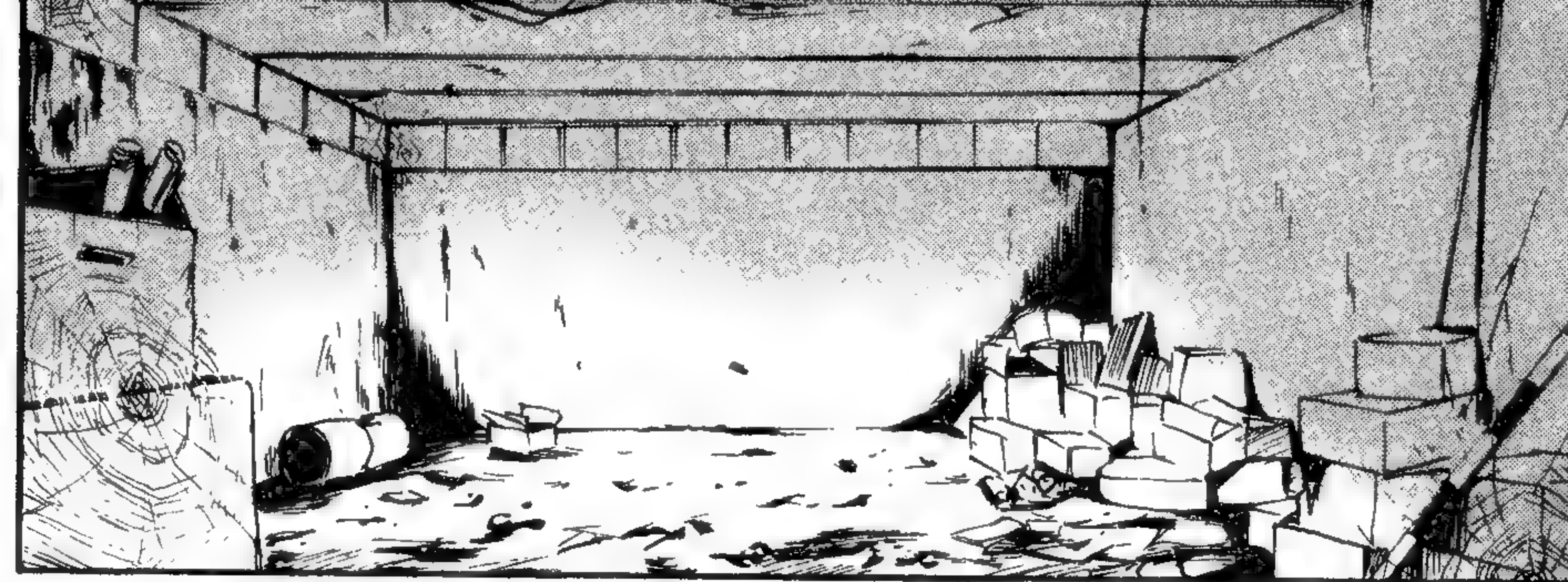
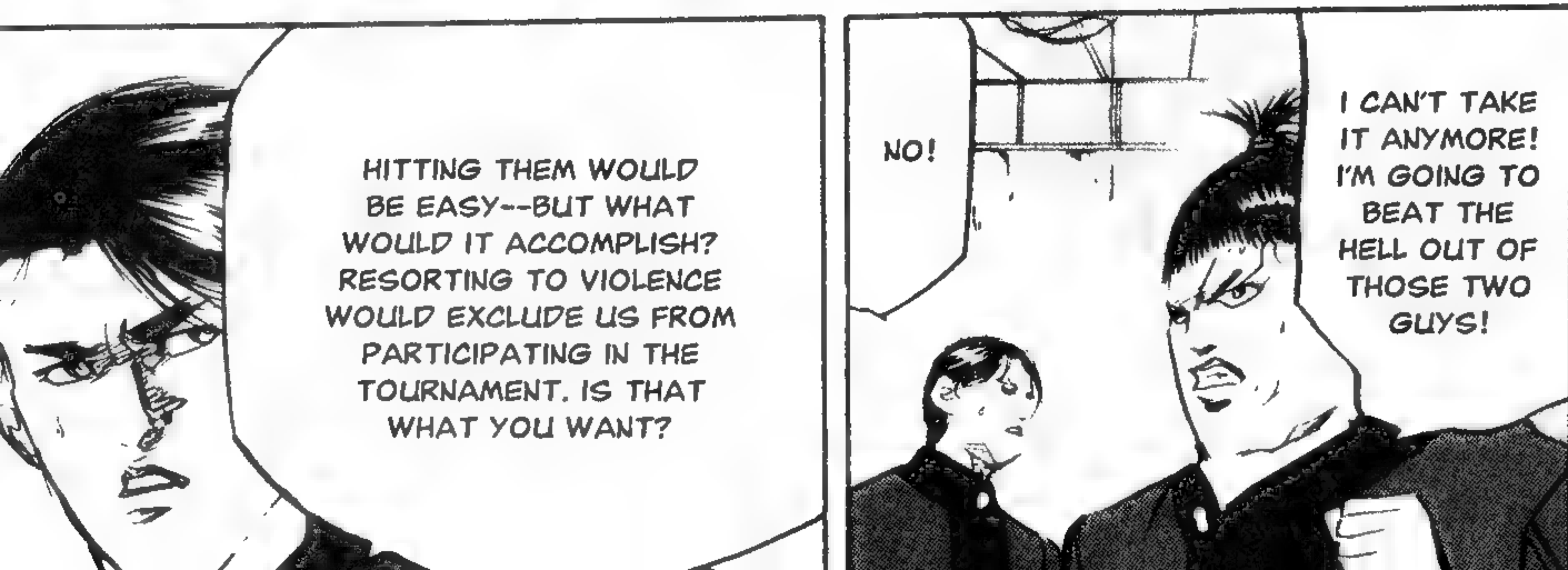
I SUPPOSE I'LL GO ANNOUNCE THAT WE'RE HERE.



YES, SIR.

YOU NEED TO BE HUMBLE AND TREAT YOUR OPPONENTS WITH RESPECT.







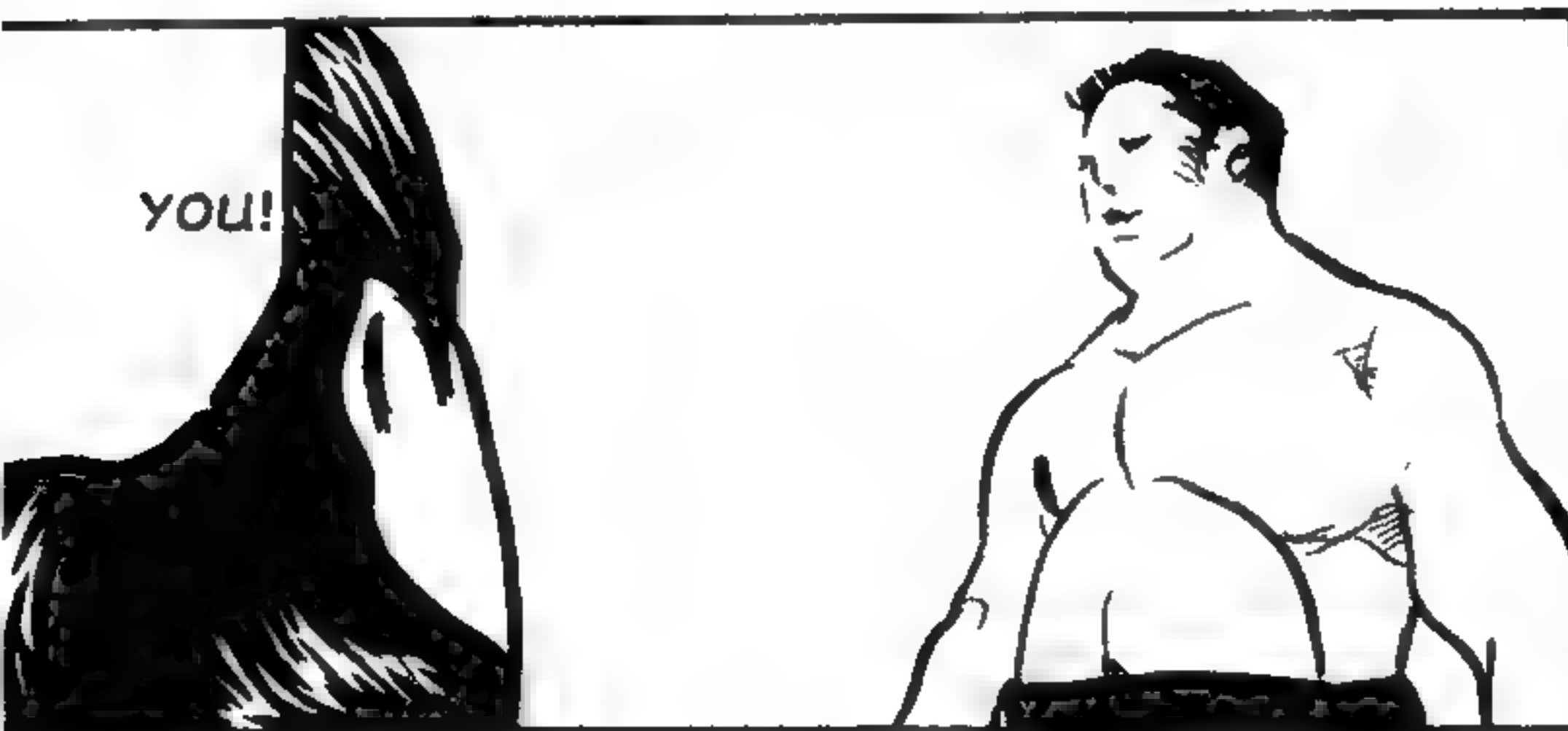
I TOLD YOU,
I'M JUST
HAPPY TO
HAVE YOU
GUYS ON
BOARD.



DON'T
WORRY
ABOUT IT.
IF ANYONE
WANTS TO
LAUGH, LET
'EM LAUGH!

WE'VE BEEN
SELFISH...

WE'RE
SORRY,
CAPTAIN.

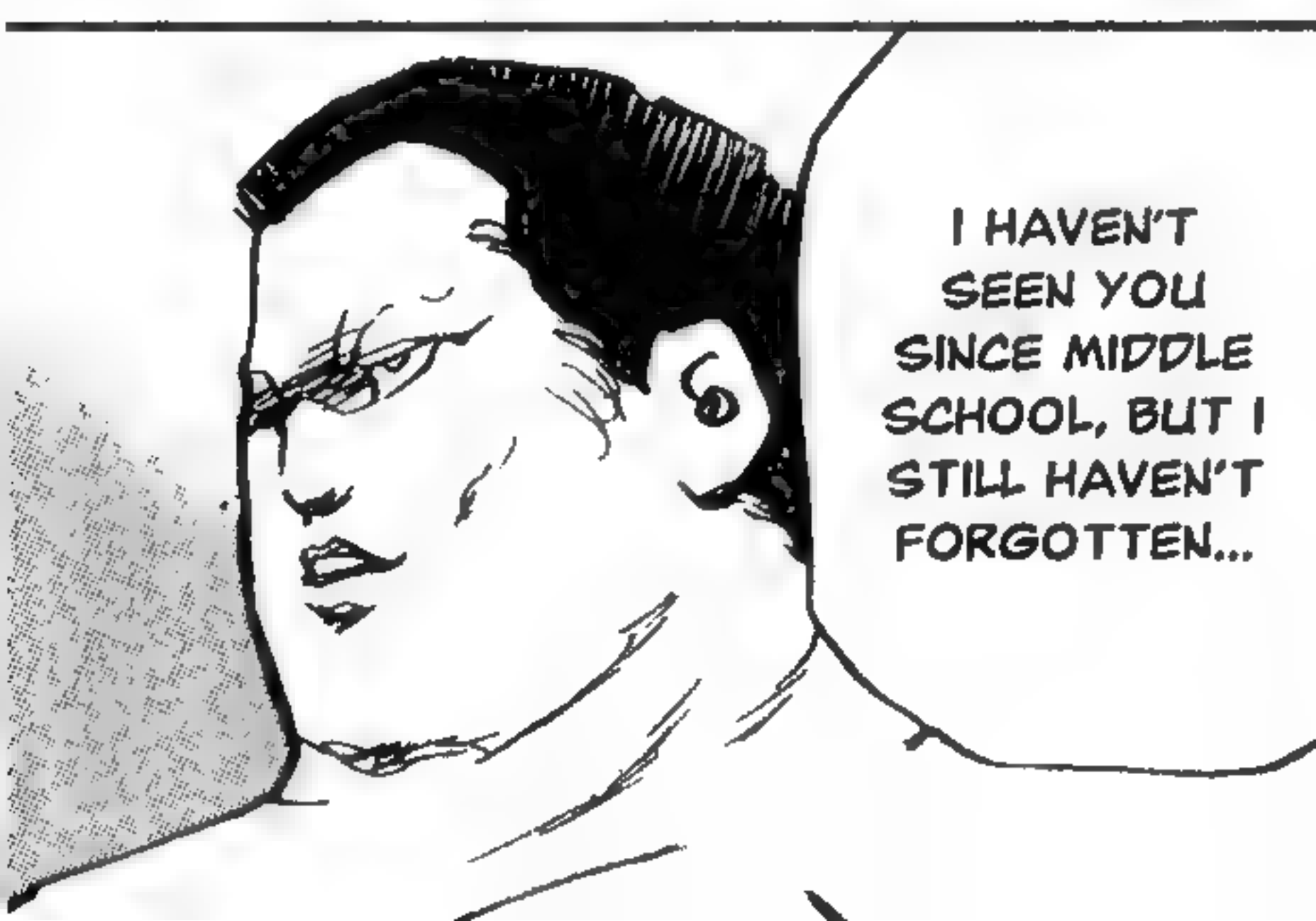


YOU!

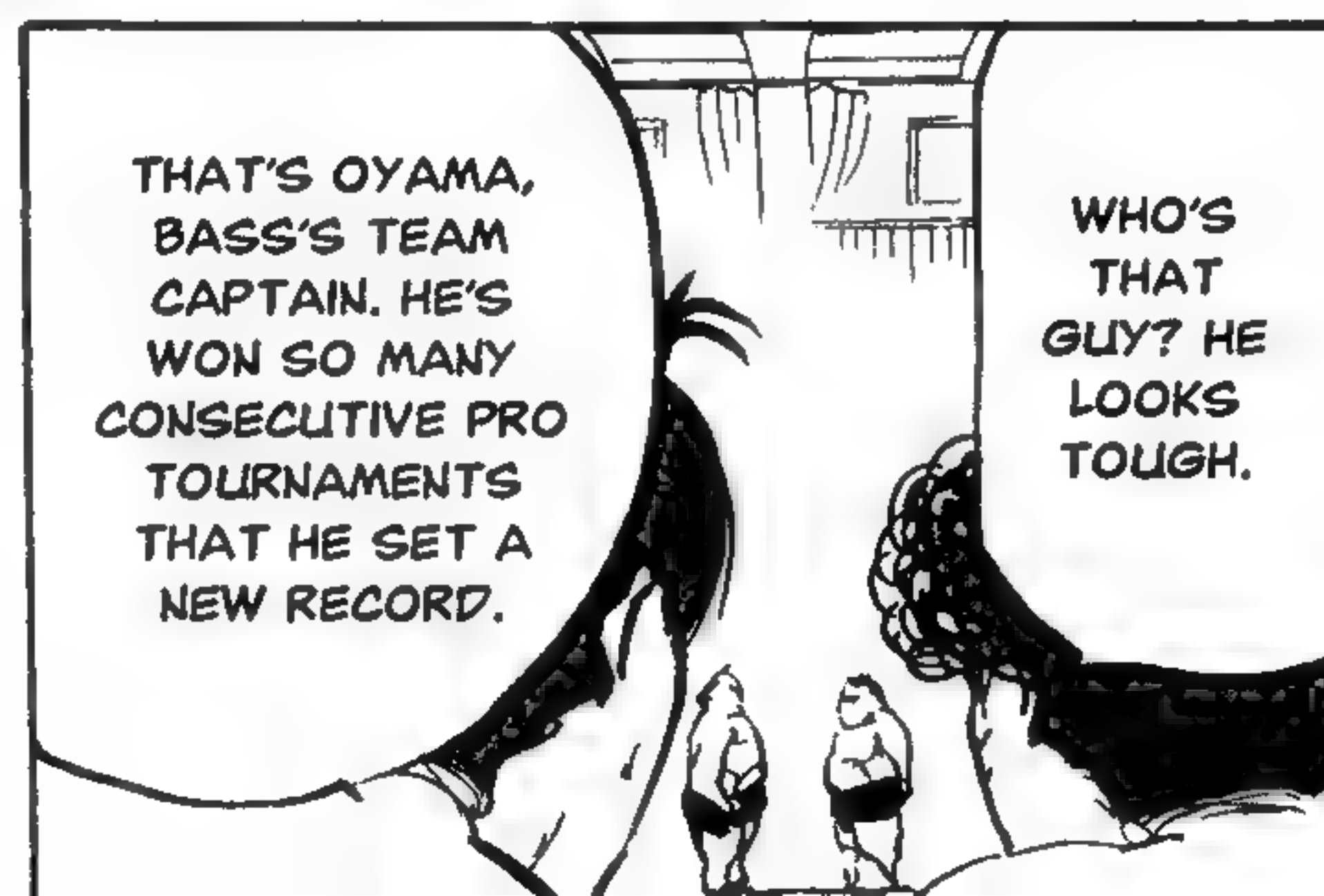


HUH?

WELL,
WELL. IT'S
BEEN A
WHILE.

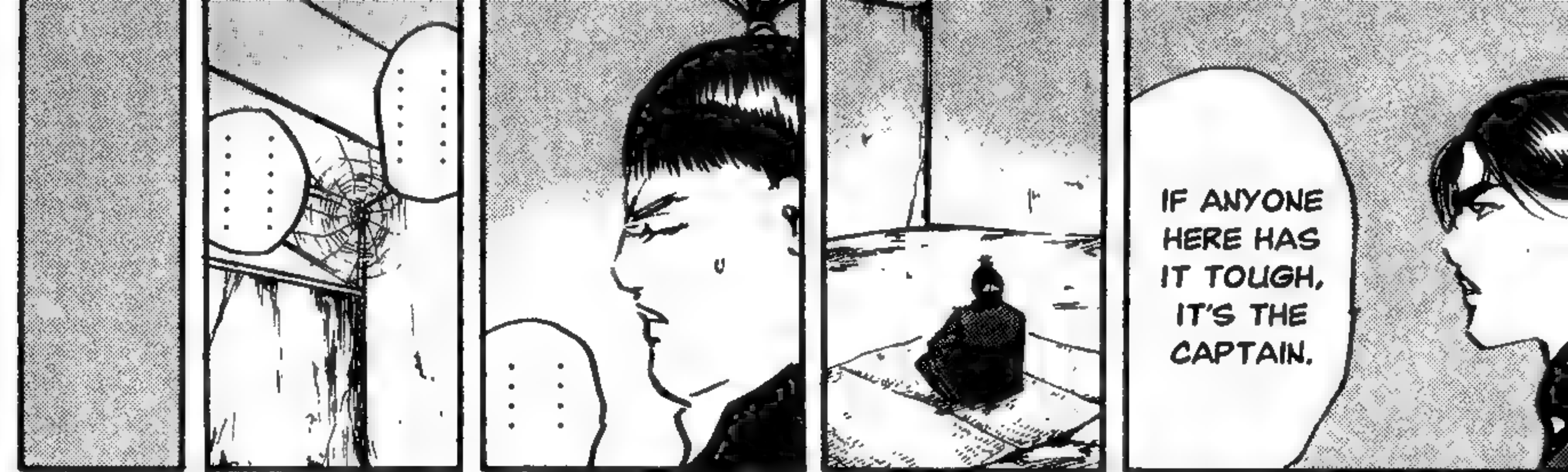


I HAVEN'T
SEEN YOU
SINCE MIDDLE
SCHOOL, BUT I
STILL HAVEN'T
FORGOTTEN...

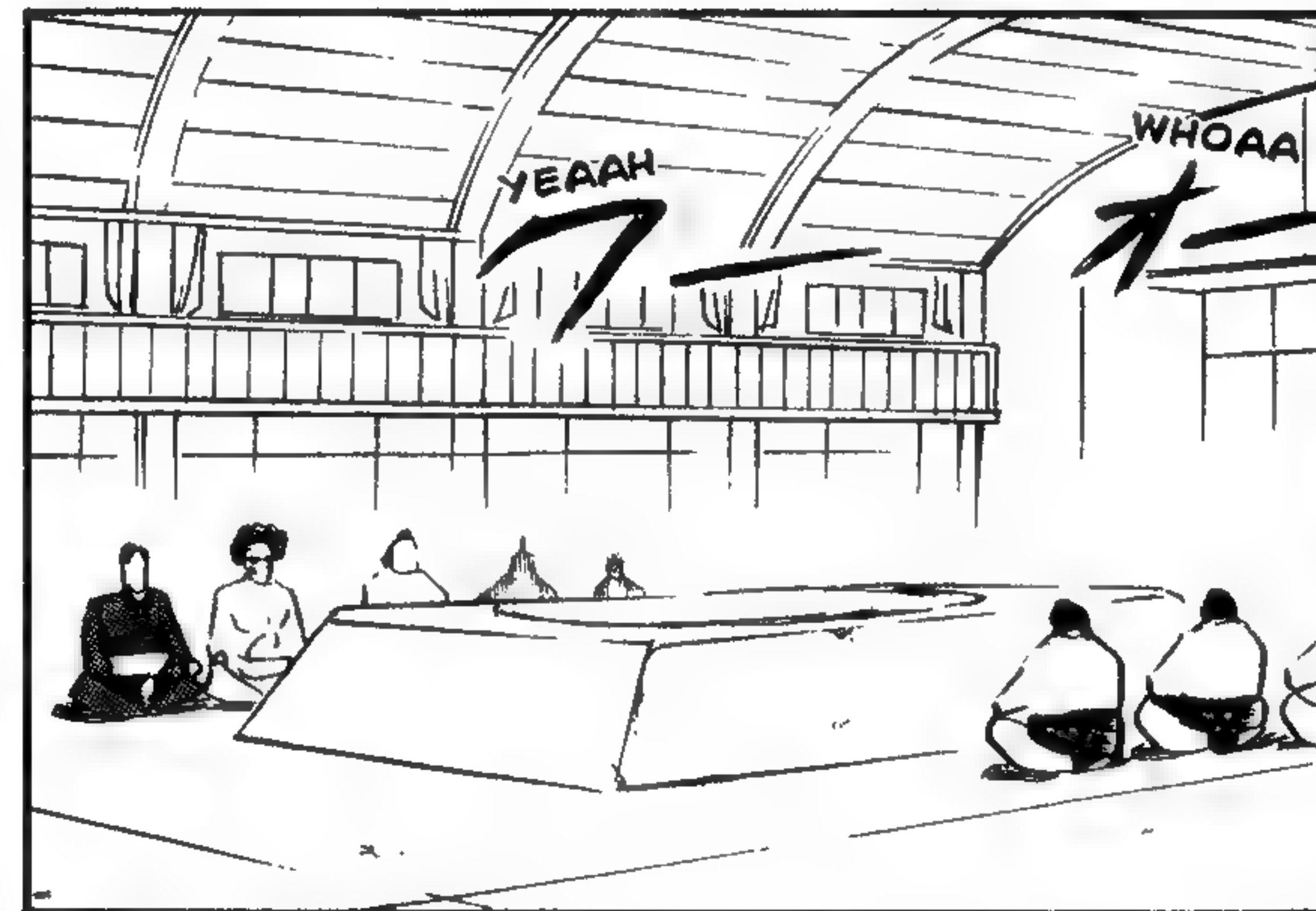


THAT'S OYAMA,
BASS'S TEAM
CAPTAIN. HE'S
WON SO MANY
CONSECUTIVE PRO
TOURNAMENTS
THAT HE SET A
NEW RECORD.

WHO'S
THAT
GUY? HE
LOOKS
TOUGH.

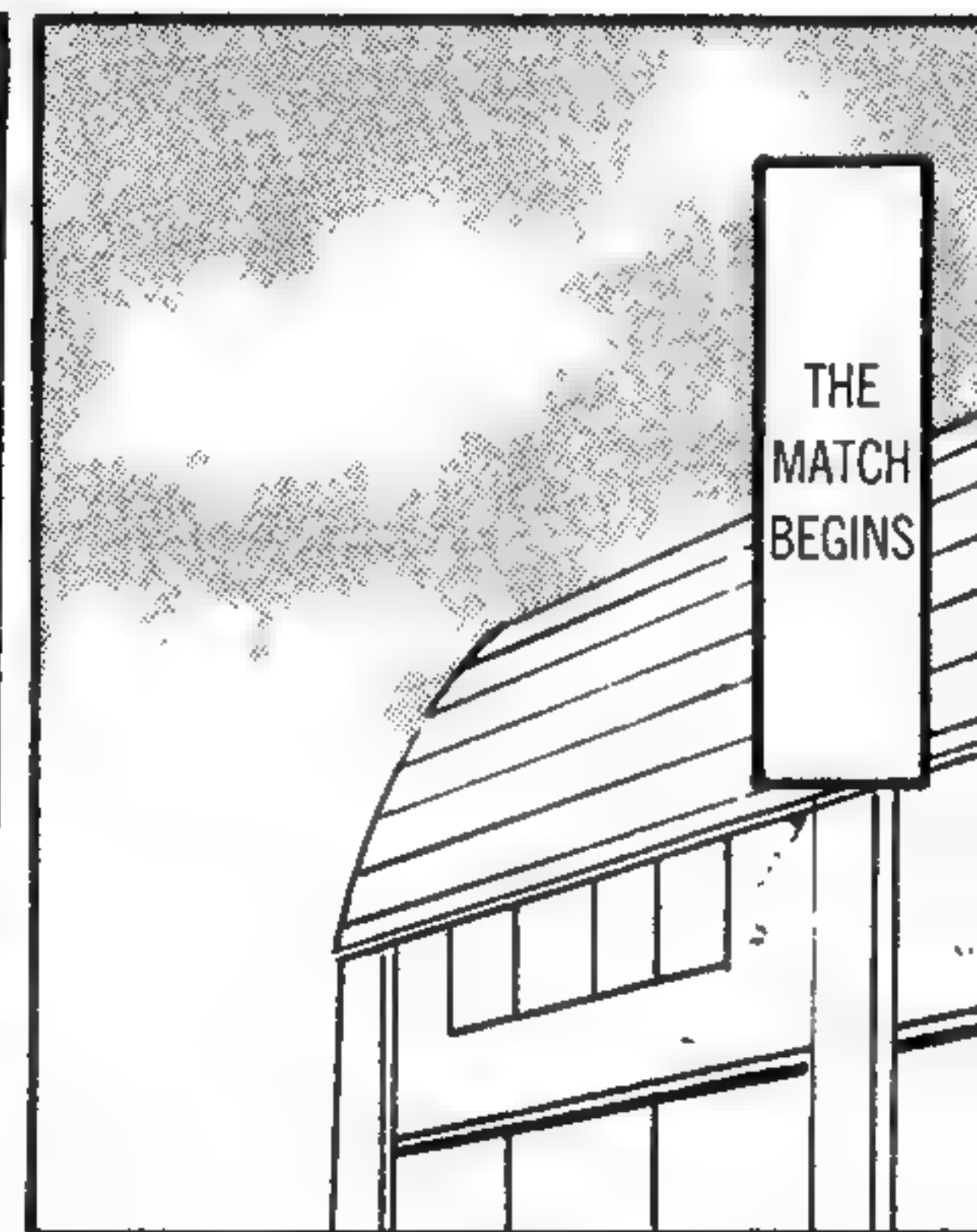


IF ANYONE
HERE HAS
IT TOUGH,
IT'S THE
CAPTAIN.

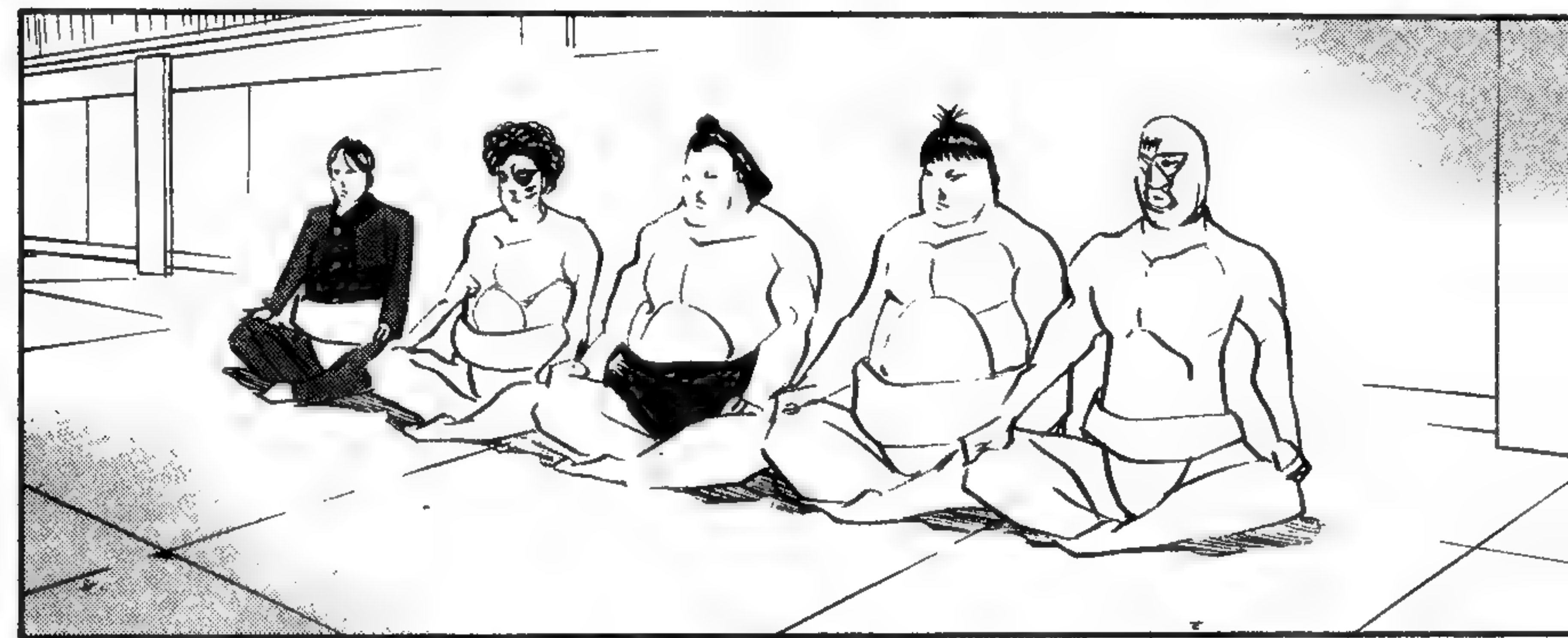


YEAH

WHOOA



THE
MATCH
BEGINS



WHO ARE
THESE
CHUMPS?

HEY, CHECK
OUT THAT
GUY WITH THE
MAKEUP. AND
THAT MASK!

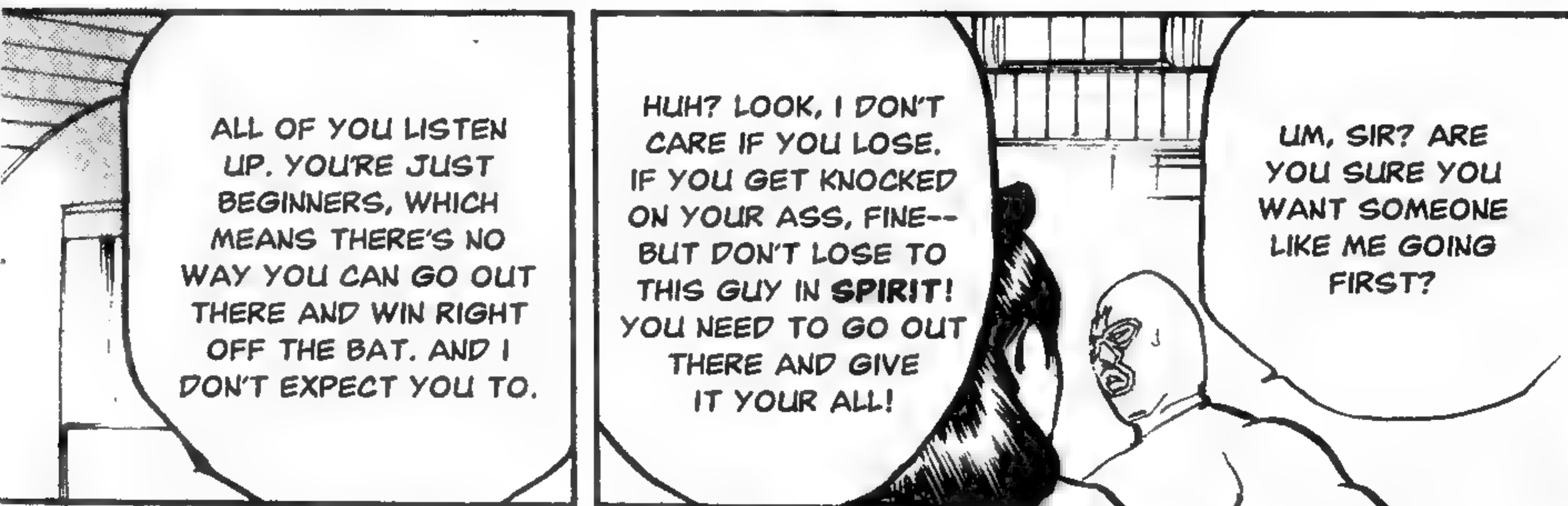


SEE YOU
IN THE RING.



WHAT?!

YOU WERE THE
ONLY GUY THAT
COULD EVER
BEAT ME.



ALL OF YOU LISTEN
UP. YOU'RE JUST
BEGINNERS, WHICH
MEANS THERE'S NO
WAY YOU CAN GO OUT
THERE AND WIN RIGHT
OFF THE BAT. AND I
DON'T EXPECT YOU TO.

HUH? LOOK, I DON'T
CARE IF YOU LOSE.
IF YOU GET KNOCKED
ON YOUR ASS, FINE--
BUT DON'T LOSE TO
THIS GUY IN **SPIRIT**!
YOU NEED TO GO OUT
THERE AND GIVE
IT YOUR ALL!

UM, SIR? ARE
YOU SURE YOU
WANT SOMEONE
LIKE ME GOING
FIRST?



CAPTAIN...

SO LONG AS YOU
GIVE IT EVERYTHING
YOU'VE GOT, THERE'S
NOTHING WRONG WITH
LOSING. JUST LEAVE
THE REST TO ME.



ER!

WHAT'S
WITH THE
MASK? AND
THE MAKEUP?
WHAT THE
HELL ARE YOU
RUNNING HERE,
A CIRCUS?



ANY-
WAY...



THAT
WAS A
LONG
TIME
AGO.



YEAH,
YOU'VE
GOT A
POINT.



YOU SHUT UP!
WE MAY BE A
BUNCH OF LOSERS,
BUT THAT
DOESN'T CHANGE
HOW TOUGH
OUR CAPTAIN
IS!

EVEN IF
YOU'RE
HURTIN' FOR
MEMBERS,
THESE GUYS
ARE THE
BOTTOM OF
THE BARREL!
HA HA!



THANKS TO YOU,
I CAN GET BACK
INTO THE RING
AGAIN.

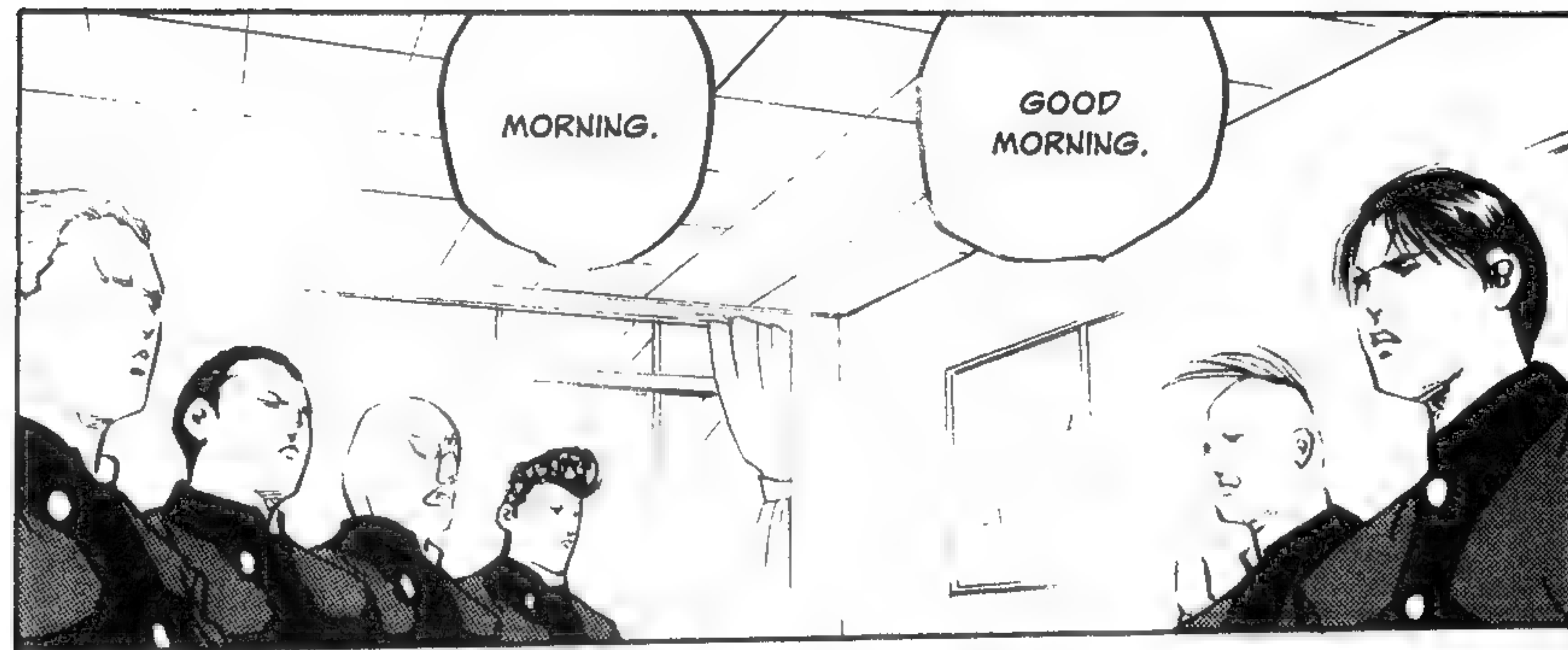
I REALLY AM
GRATEFUL TO YOU
GUYS. FROM THE
BOTTOM OF MY
HEART.



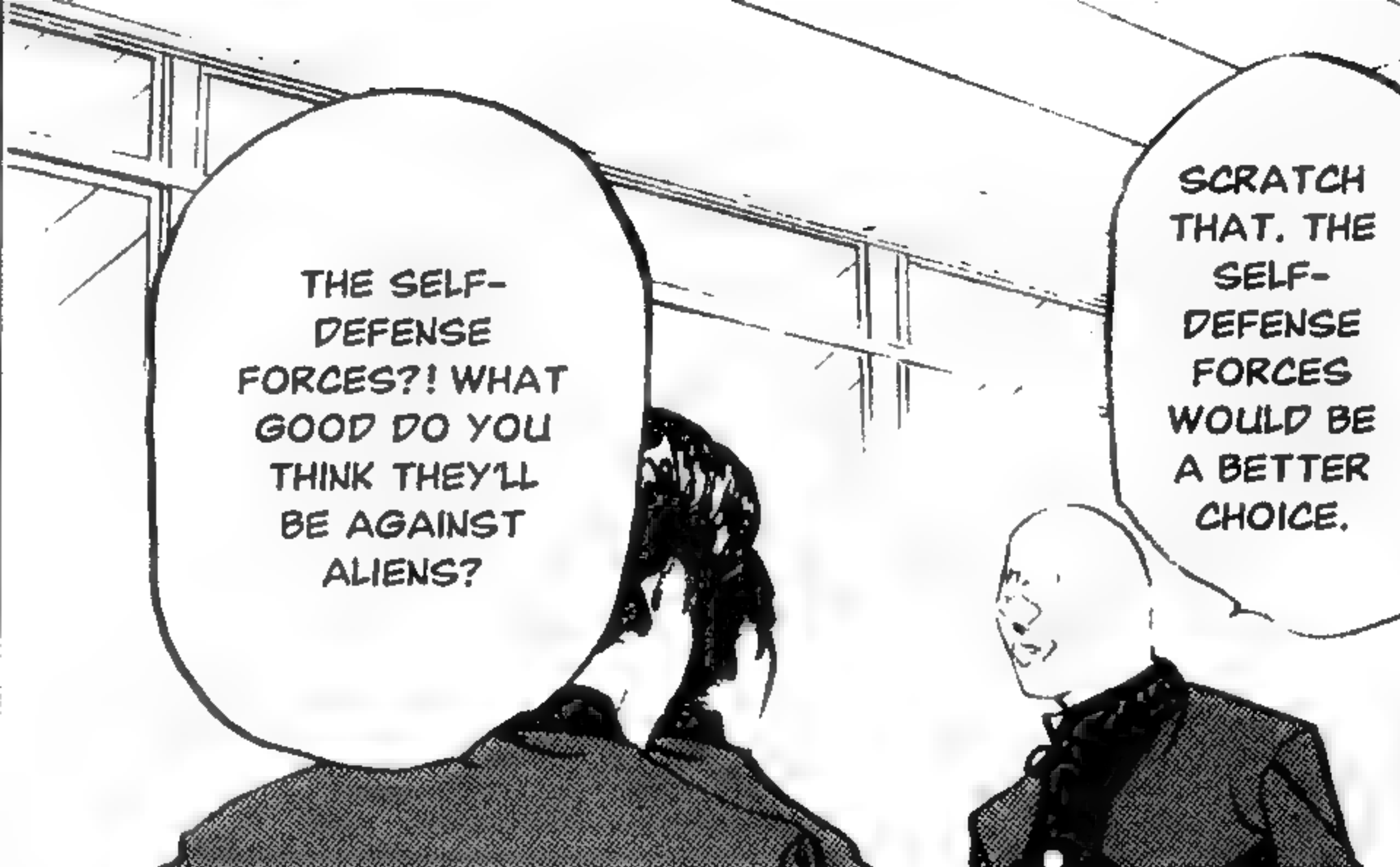
NATURALLY, THE
LAST TWO STANDING
ARE GONNA BE YOU
AND ME...AND I LOOK
FORWARD TO KNOCKIN'
YOU DOWN.

TODAY'S MATCH
WILL BE AN
ELIMINATION
BOUL.

CHAPTER 248: **ILLEGAL ALIEN**



MASKED TAKENOUCHI IS PRETTY TOUGH!



THE SELF-
DEFENSE
FORCES?! WHAT
GOOD DO YOU
THINK THEY'LL
BE AGAINST
ALIENS?

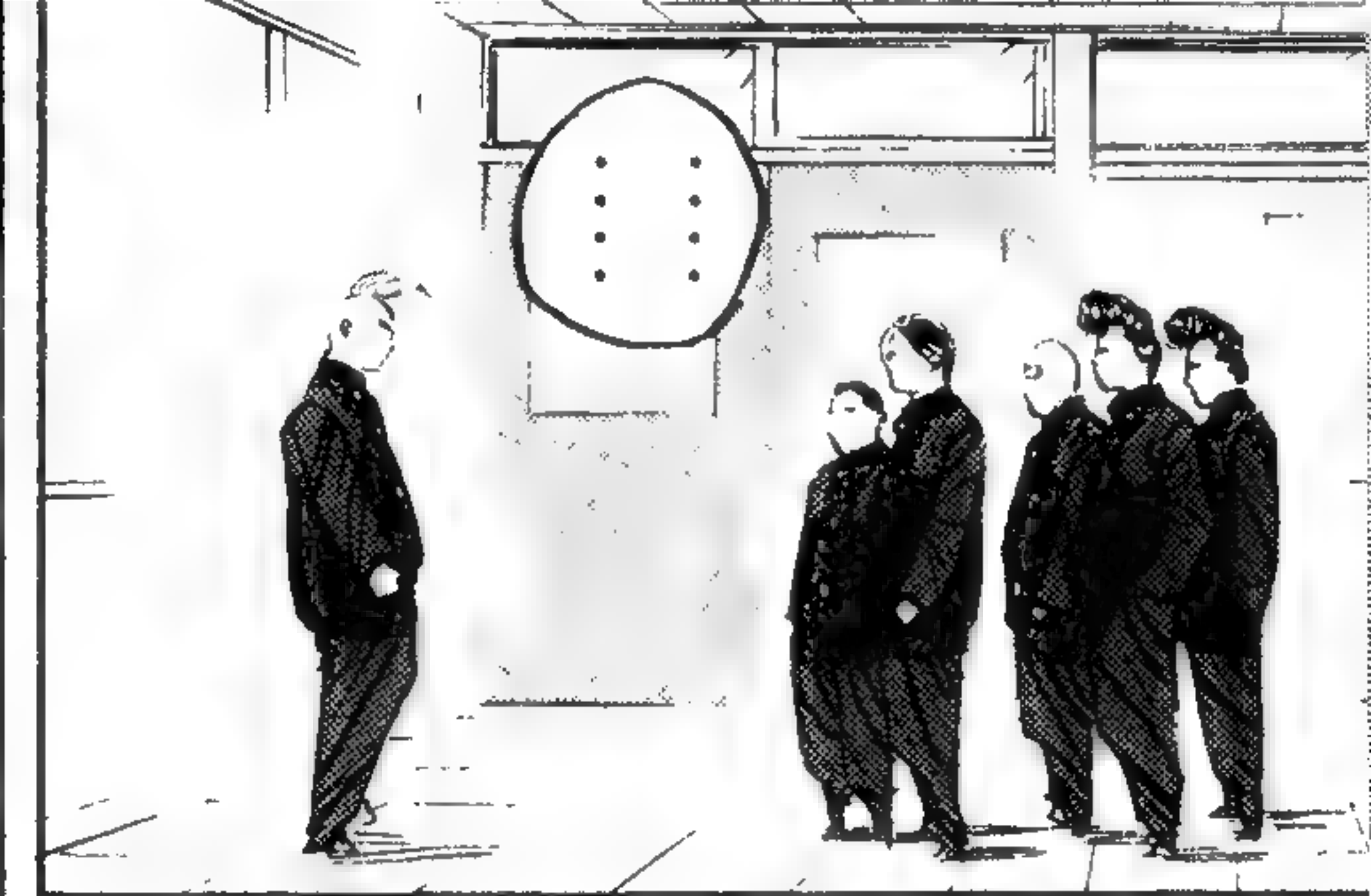
SCRATCH
THAT. THE
SELF-
DEFENSE
FORCES
WOULD BE
A BETTER
CHOICE.



ONE THING
WE COULD
DO IS TELL
THE POLICE.



I SEE.



NOW HOLD
ON A MINUTE.
YOU'RE JUST
LETTING YOUR
IMAGINATIONS
RUN WILD.

THEY'RE
GOING TO
COME AT US
WITH LASER
BEAMS AND
THINGS LIKE
THAT.



WHAT?!
NEXT WEEK?
THAT'S WAY
TOO SOON!

BUT
HE SAID
PROBABLY
SOMETIME
NEXT WEEK.



WELL, HE
DIDN'T HAVE
AN EXACT
DATE OR
ANYTHING.

WHEN
IS THIS
SUPPOSED
TO HAPPEN?



THE WEAPONS THEY
USE IN REAL LIFE
COULD BE A LOT
LESS FLAMBOYANT.

IF YOU THINK THAT
ALIENS = LASER
BEAMS, YOU'VE
BEEN WATCHING
WAY TOO MANY
MOVIES.

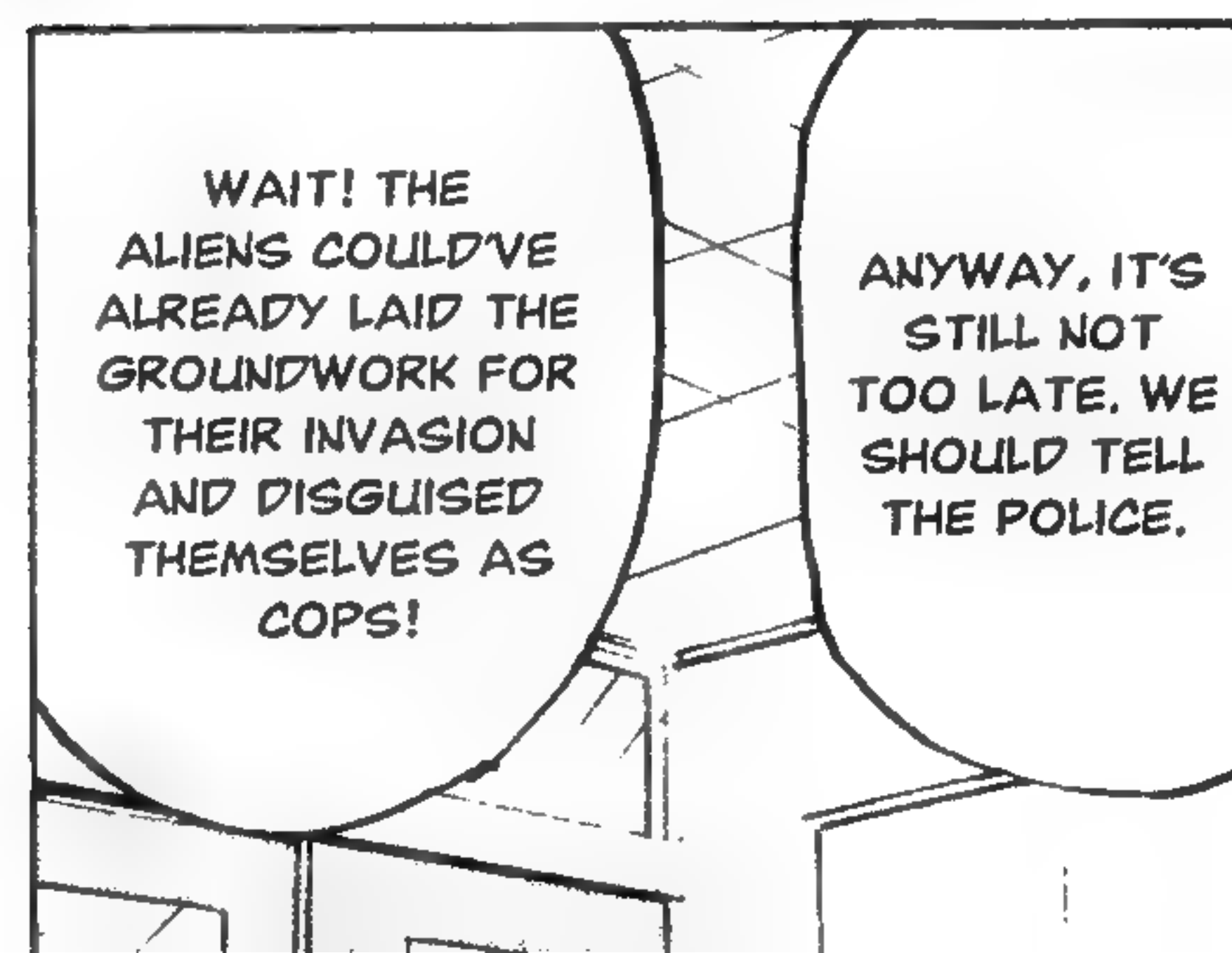


IT'S ALL SO
SUDDEN. THERE
ISN'T EVEN
ANY TIME TO
PREPARE!



SORRY.
I JUST HEARD
IT MYSELF
LAST WEEK.

LISTEN, YOU
NEED TO
HURRY AND
TELL US
THAT SORT
OF THING.
IT'S MOST
UPSETTING.



WAIT! THE
ALIENS COULD'VE
ALREADY LAID THE
GROUNDWORK FOR
THEIR INVASION
AND DISGUISED
THEMSELVES AS
COPS!

ANYWAY, IT'S
STILL NOT
TOO LATE. WE
SHOULD TELL
THE POLICE.



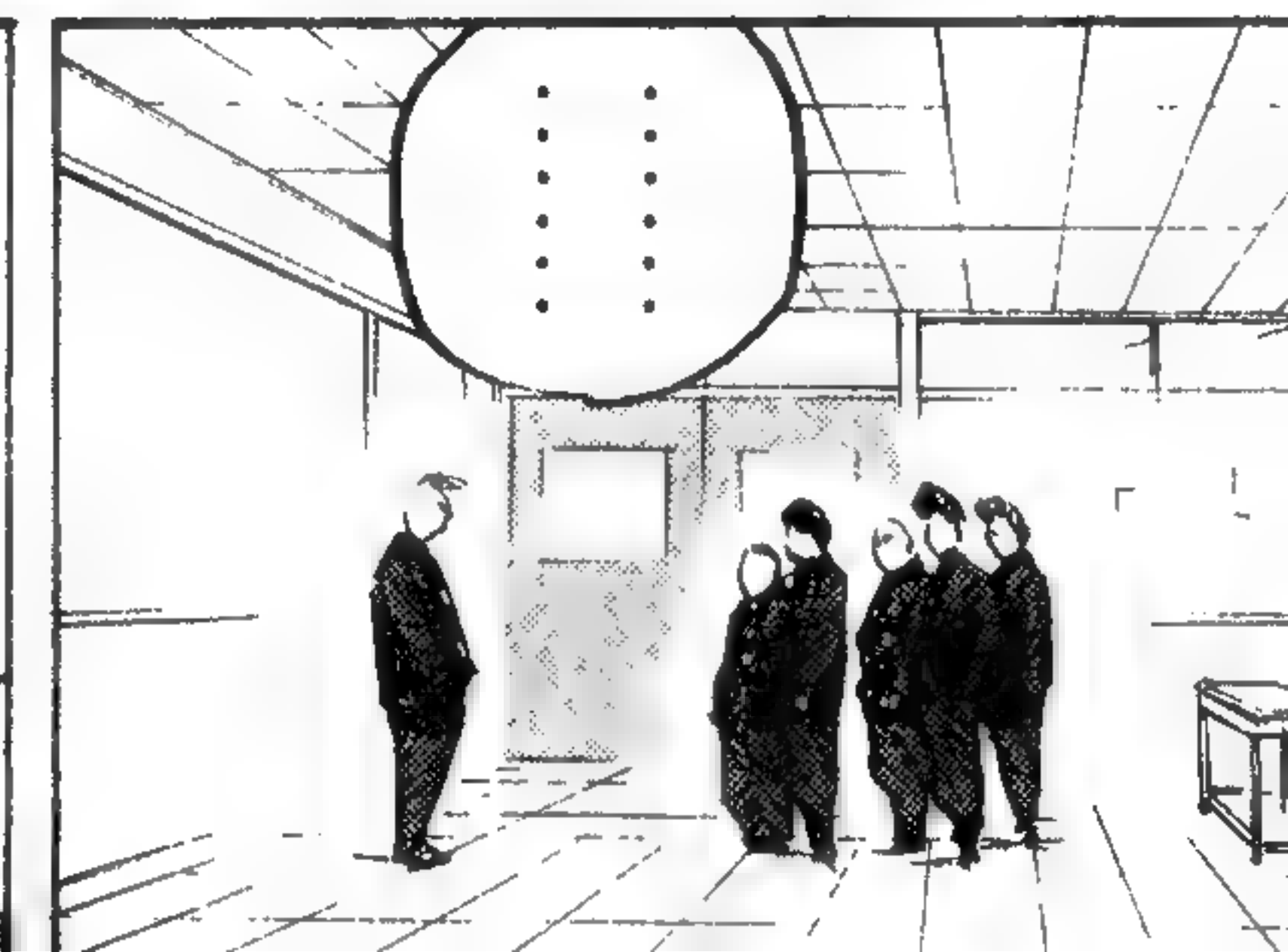
IN THAT
CASE, WE'D
PROBABLY
WIN, HUH?

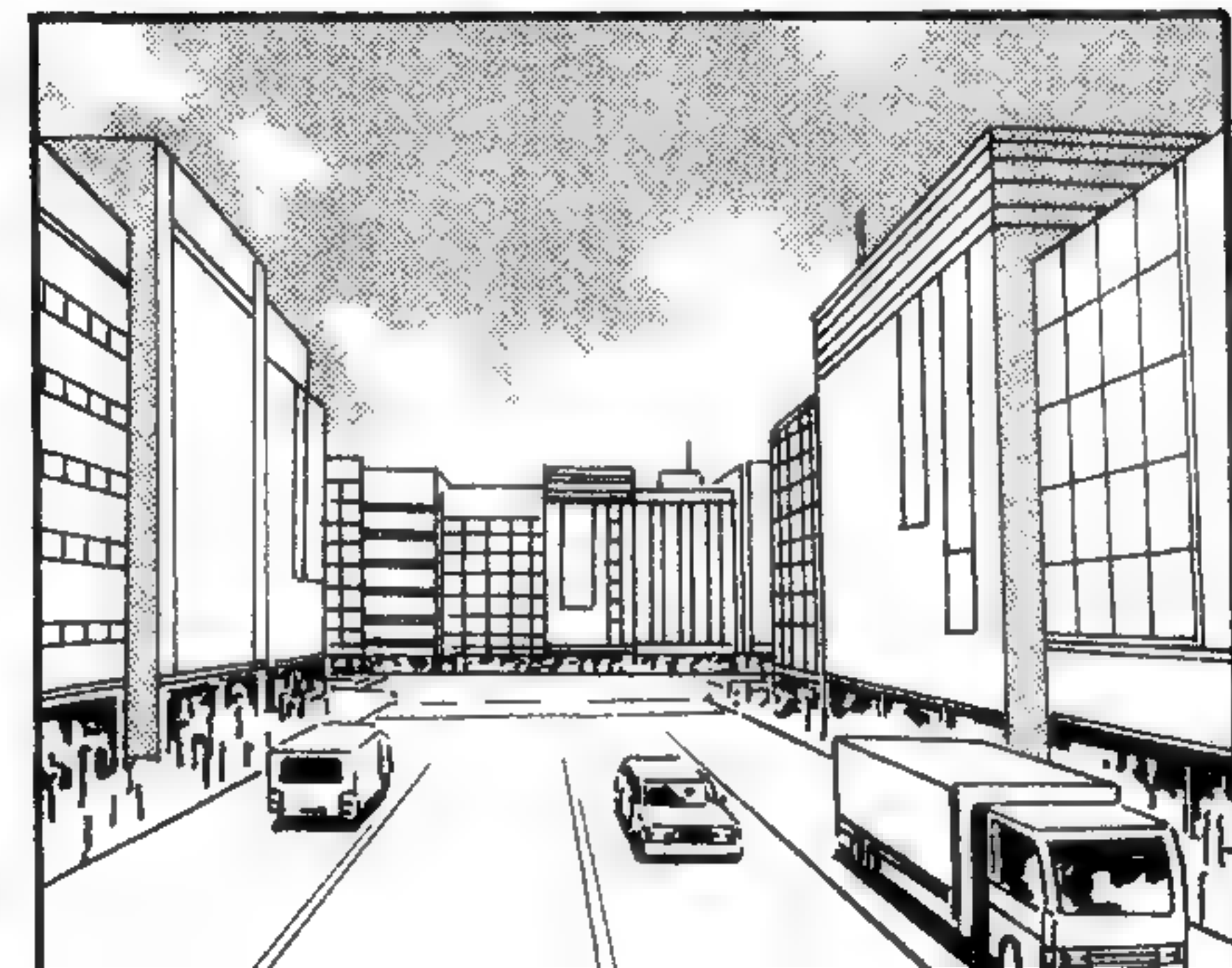
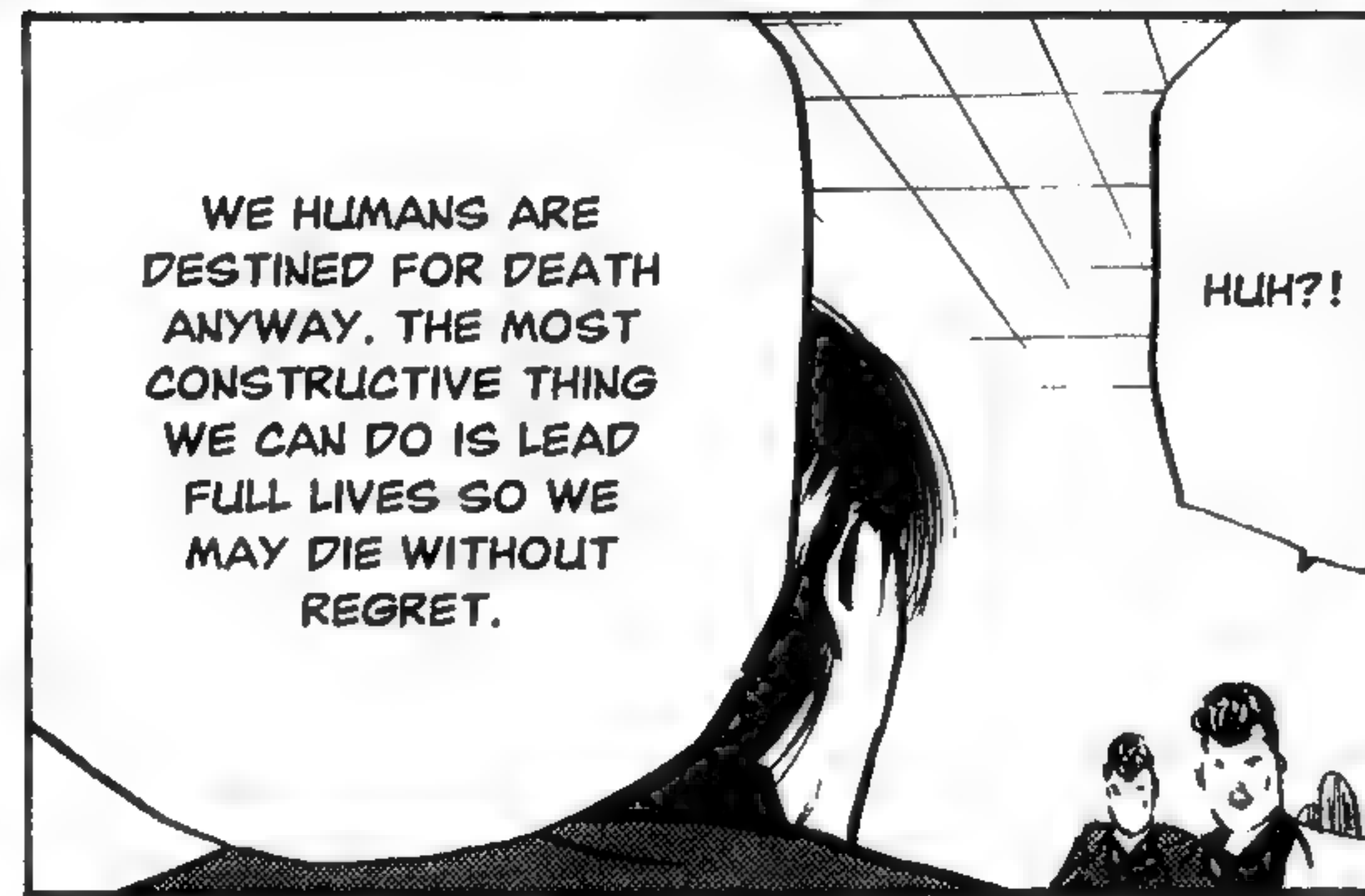
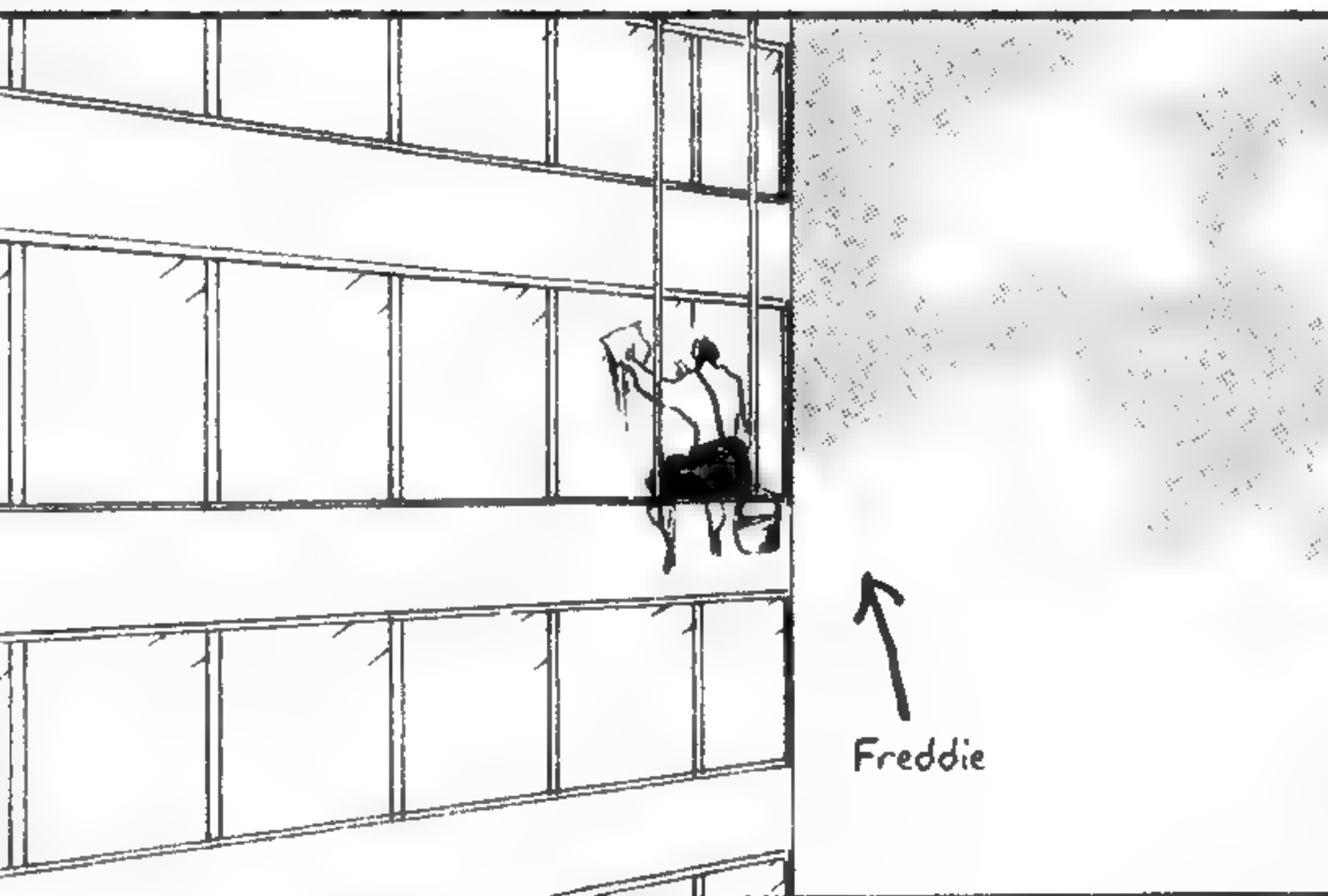
FOR
EXAMPLE,
THEY COULD
COME
AT US
THROWING
ROCKS.



WE HAVE TO
GET READY
FOR WAR WITH
AN ALIEN RACE,
RIGHT?

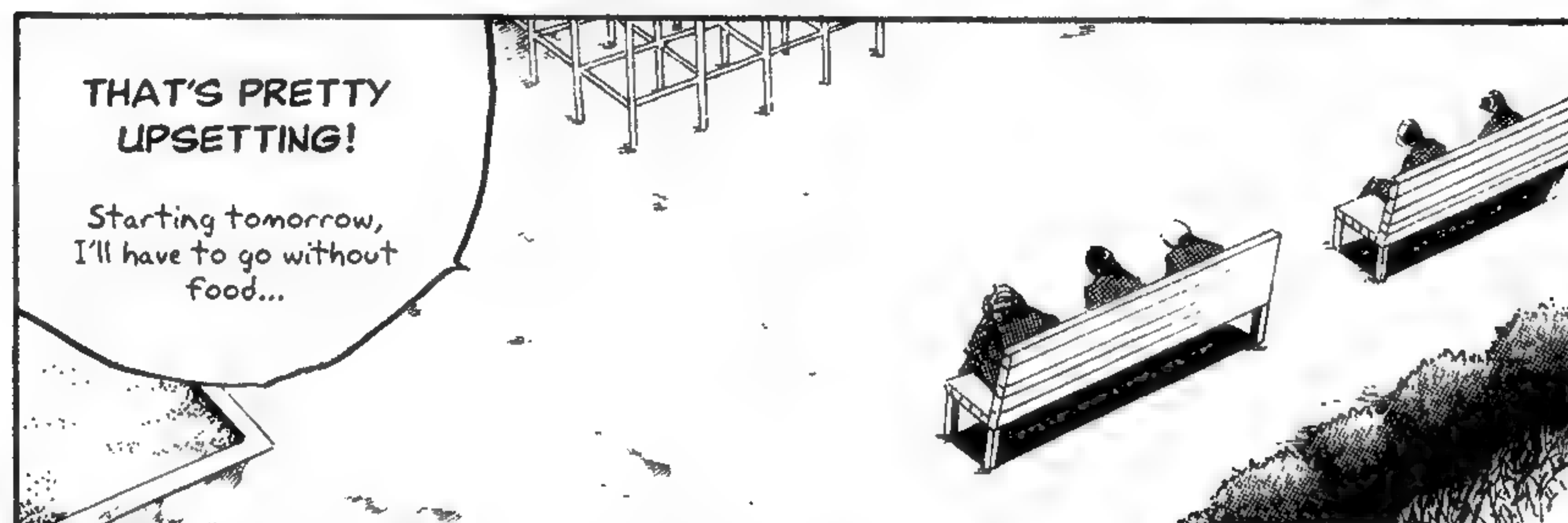
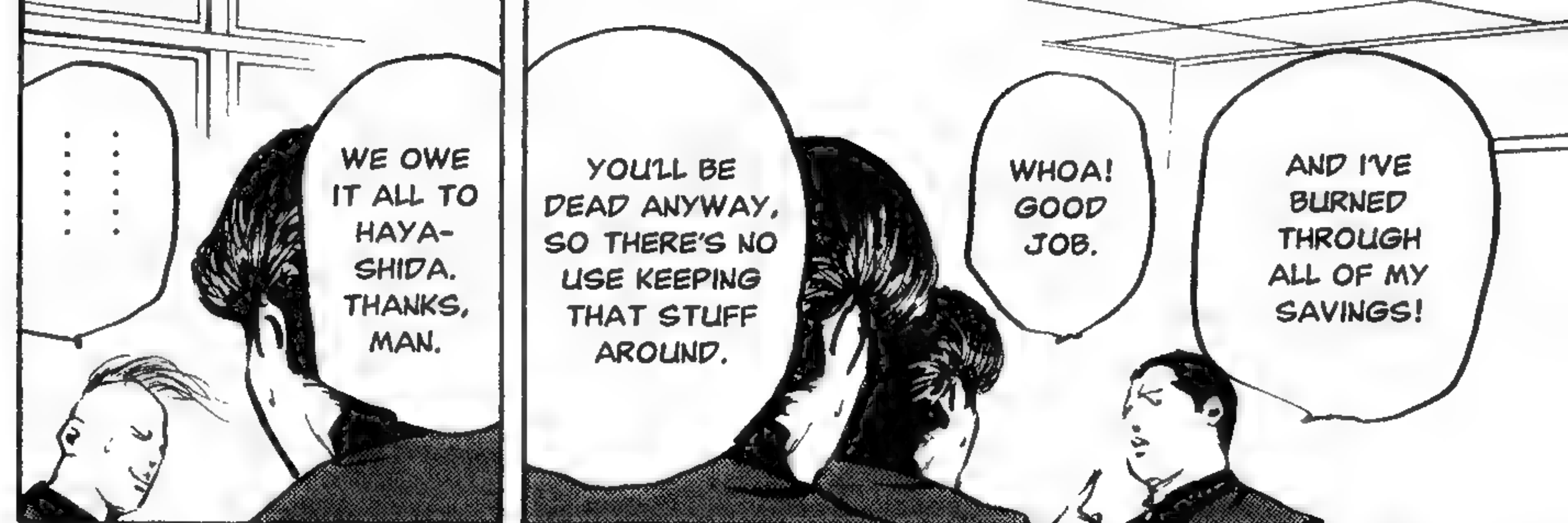
PREPARE?
PREPARE
HOW?





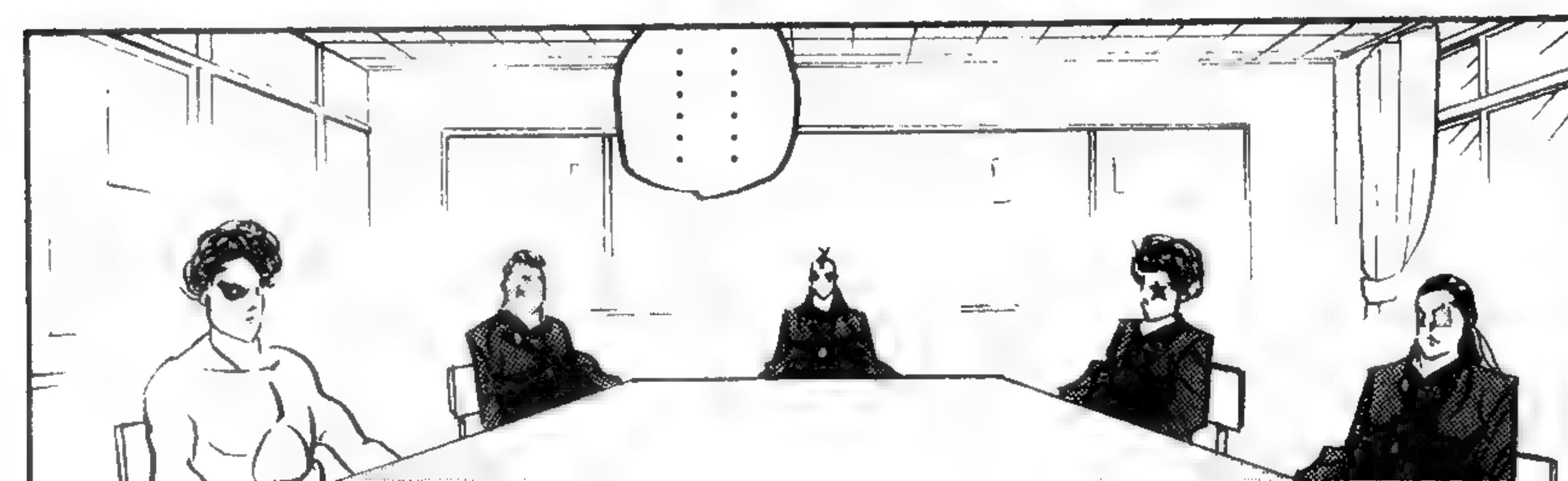
NOBUO OYAMA

The head of the Bass High School Sumo Club, which boasts an impressive number of members, Oyama is a formidable-looking man with an attitude to match. He's a talented sumo wrestler, having (as we saw in the story) set a new record for consecutive wins. Apparently, the only person who's ever beaten him is the head of the Cromartie High School Sumo Club. Oyama has the heady "heard of him somewhere before" air about him that denotes a truly world-class rival. I think it's fairly obvious from reading the story, but Oyama's climactic showdown with the head of the Cromartie Sumo Club basically gets scrapped. That's this manga for you.



UH, IS THAT NEWS REALLY UPSETTING?

CHAPTER 249: THROW AWAY YOUR TELEVISION

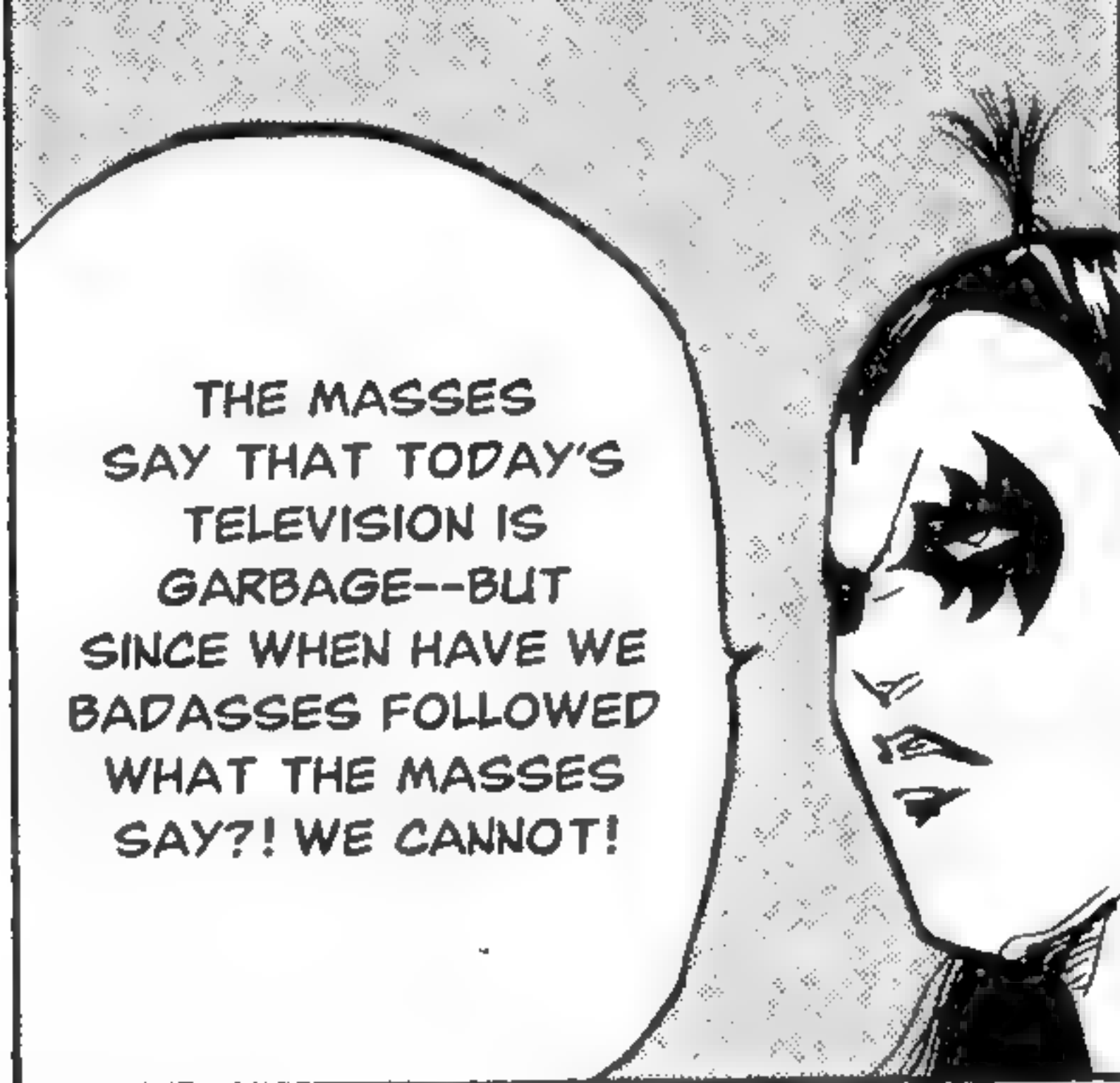


CROMARTIE NEWS

SHEDDING
LIGHT ON WHY
THIS VOLUME
IS NAMED
"THE PHOENIX
STORY"!

For some time now, each volume of *Cromartie* has featured a subtitle. For the most part they can be written off as meaningless, but for diehard fans of *Cromartie* in its collected graphic novel form, they (probably) represent an essential part of the reading experience. Such readers tend to view them with impassioned gazes, thinking such thoughts as, "What kind of subtitle will he come up with next? I can't wait!" or "This has nothing at all to do with what's inside!" This time around, because it was getting to be a pain I wanted to give the readers a chance to contribute to the creation of the manga, I decided to field ideas for a subtitle from the reading audience. Pretty great, huh?

Several excellent suggestions were received via HUDSON's cell phone site, which rather subtly (but for real) offered visitors the chance to contribute their ideas...and of these, we decided to use "The Phoenix Story," a suggestion by a visitor going by the name of Katie Kichi. The good employees at HUDSON were rather skeptical that we would use any of these suggestions at all, so we were able to get a nice, rousing surprise out of them. Congratulations, Katie Kichi! But please stop using such a weird online name! We'll be sending an extra-special present your way!



THE MASSES SAY THAT TODAY'S TELEVISION IS GARBAGE--BUT SINCE WHEN HAVE WE BADASSES FOLLOWED WHAT THE MASSES SAY?! WE CANNOT!



NONE OF YOU GET IT, DO YOU?

THIS HAS STARTED TO FEEL SORT OF LIKE A LETTERS TO THE EDITOR COLUMN...



HUH?!

I THOUGHT WE COULD WATCH TV.



FOR TODAY'S MEETING...



VERY WELL, LET US WATCH SOME TELEVISION AND SEE FOR OURSELVES.



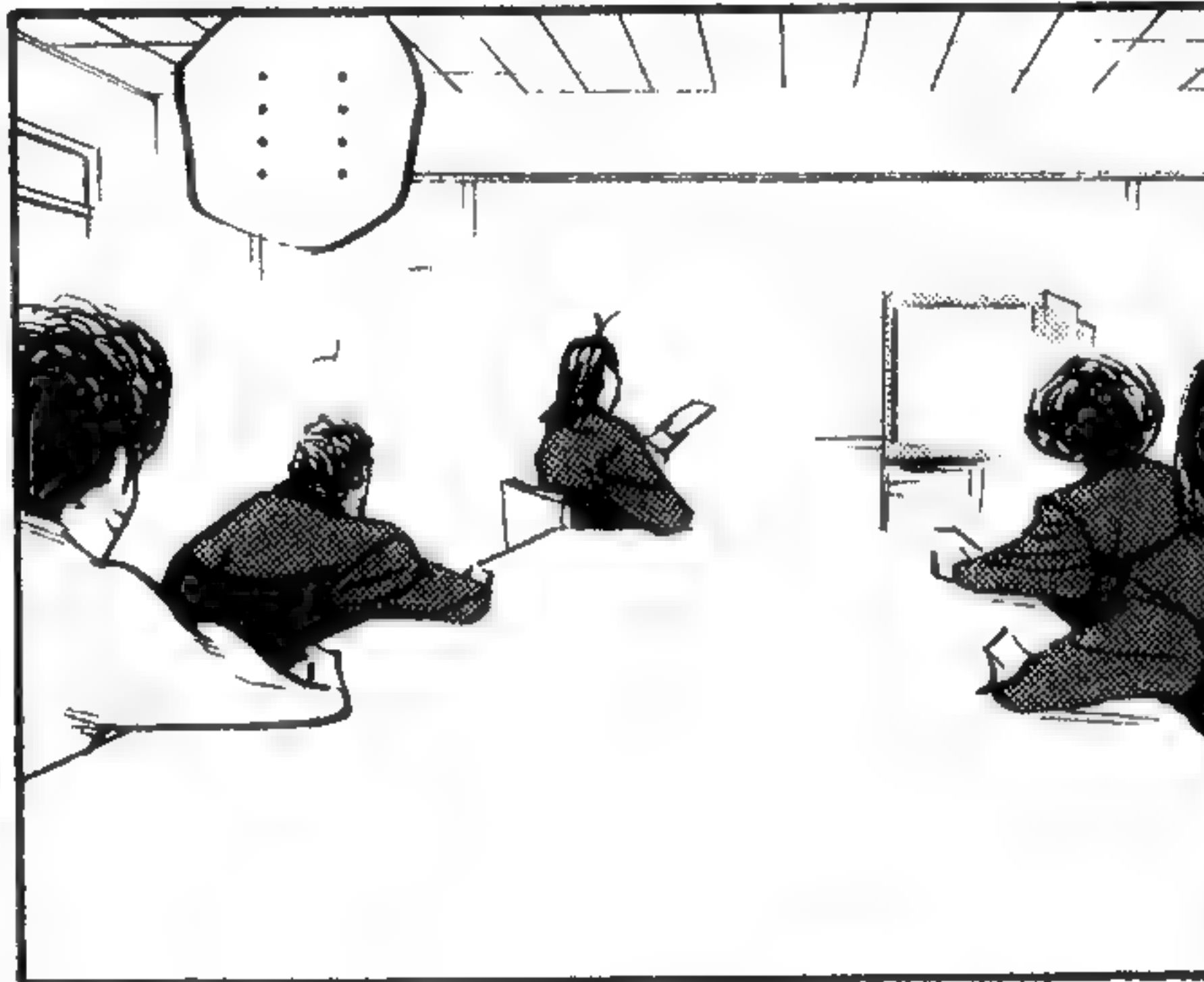
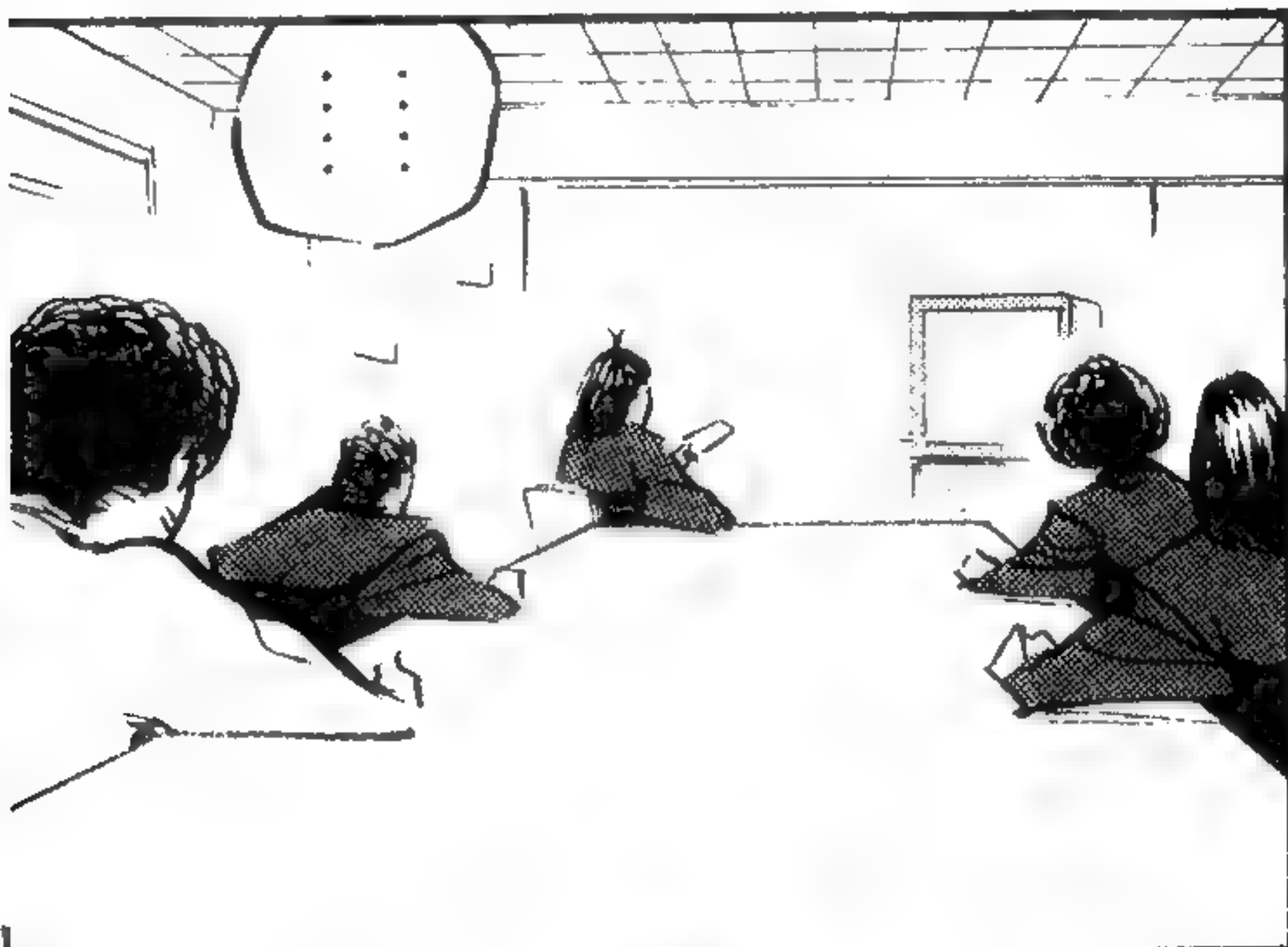
I'M GLAD TO HEAR IT.

WHEN YOU PUT IT LIKE THAT, YOU'VE GOT A POINT.

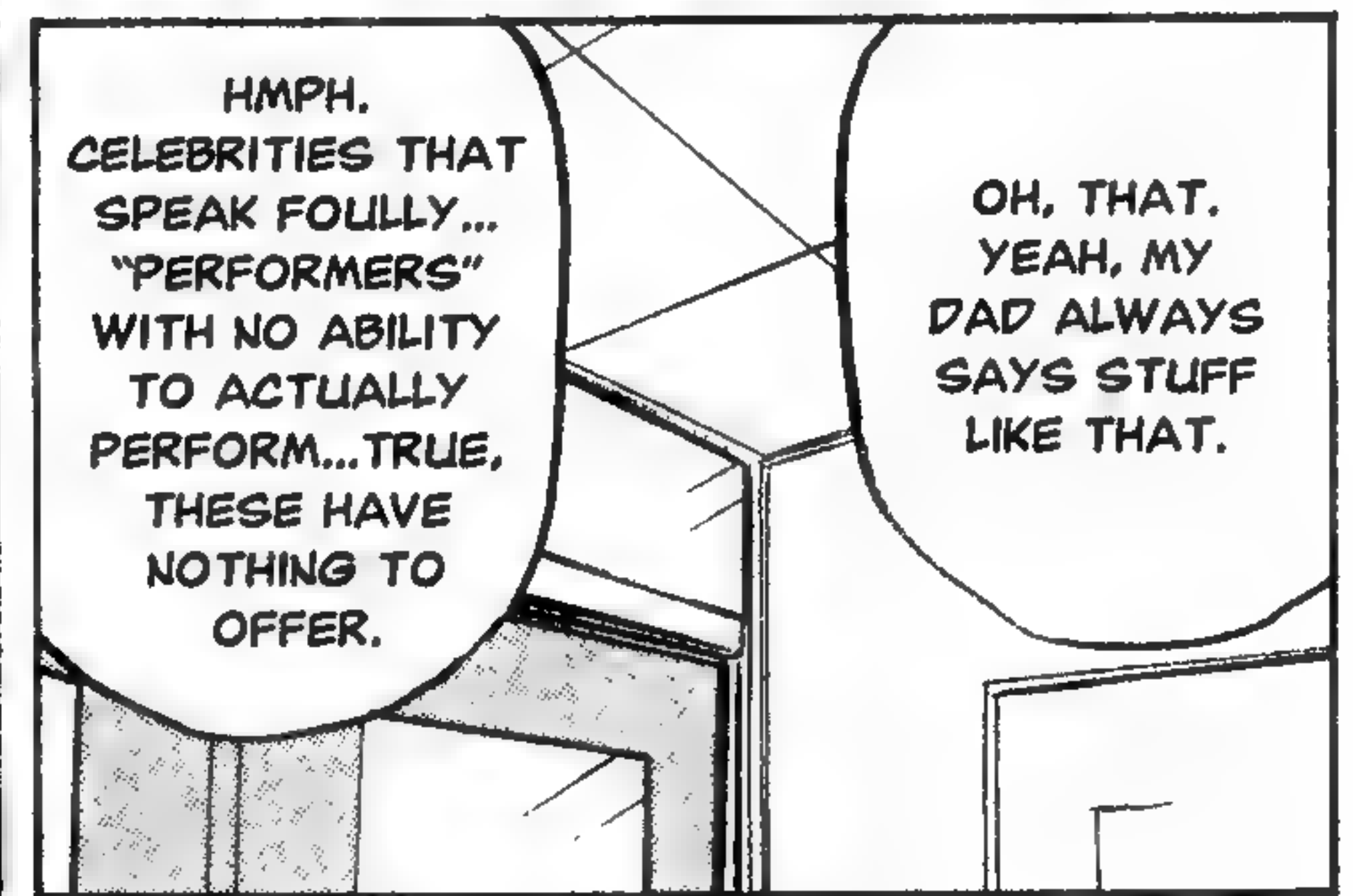


PEOPLE ARE SAYING THAT SHOWS ARE SIMPLY NO GOOD... THAT COMPARED TO THE SHOWS OF OLD, THESE NEWER ONES ARE BORING AND LACK CONTENT.

IT SEEMS THE QUALITY OF TELEVISION SHOWS HAS BEEN IN A SHARP DECLINE RECENTLY.



BUT HAS TELEVISION WELL AND TRULY GONE TO THE CRAPPER?



HMPH. CELEBRITIES THAT SPEAK FOULLY... "PERFORMERS" WITH NO ABILITY TO ACTUALLY PERFORM... TRUE, THESE HAVE NOTHING TO OFFER.

OH, THAT. YEAH, MY DAD ALWAYS SAYS STUFF LIKE THAT.



COME ON, BOSS! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!

I'M PUSHING THE BUTTON BUT IT WON'T TURN ON.



HM?



WHEN DID WE BECOME AN ORGANIZATION LIKE THAT?!

HOLD ON A MINUTE THERE, BOSS!

FINDING THE ANSWER TO THAT IS ALSO ONE OF OUR ASSIGNED DUTIES, IS IT NOT?

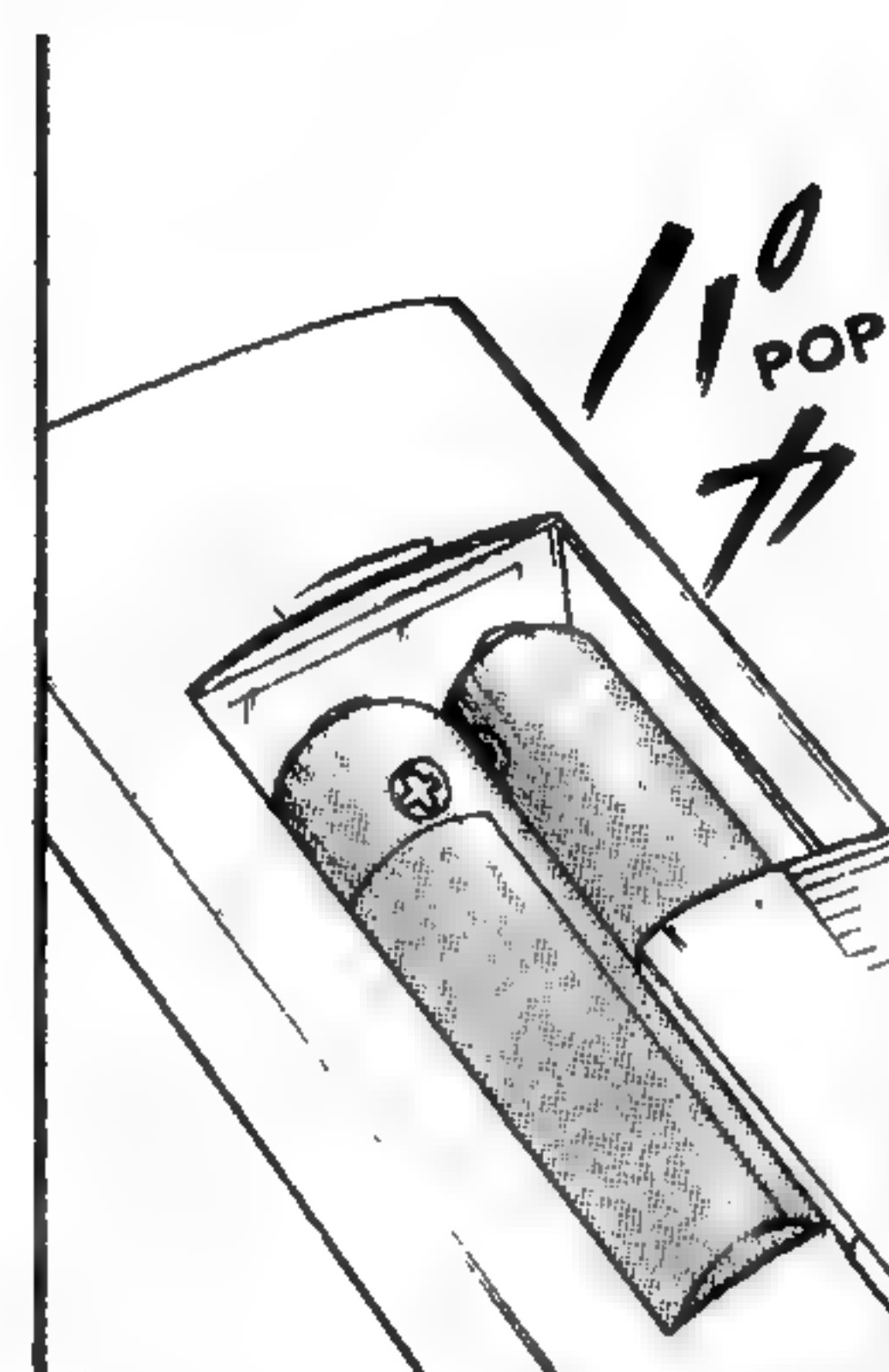


THEN
IT'S NO
HOPE!

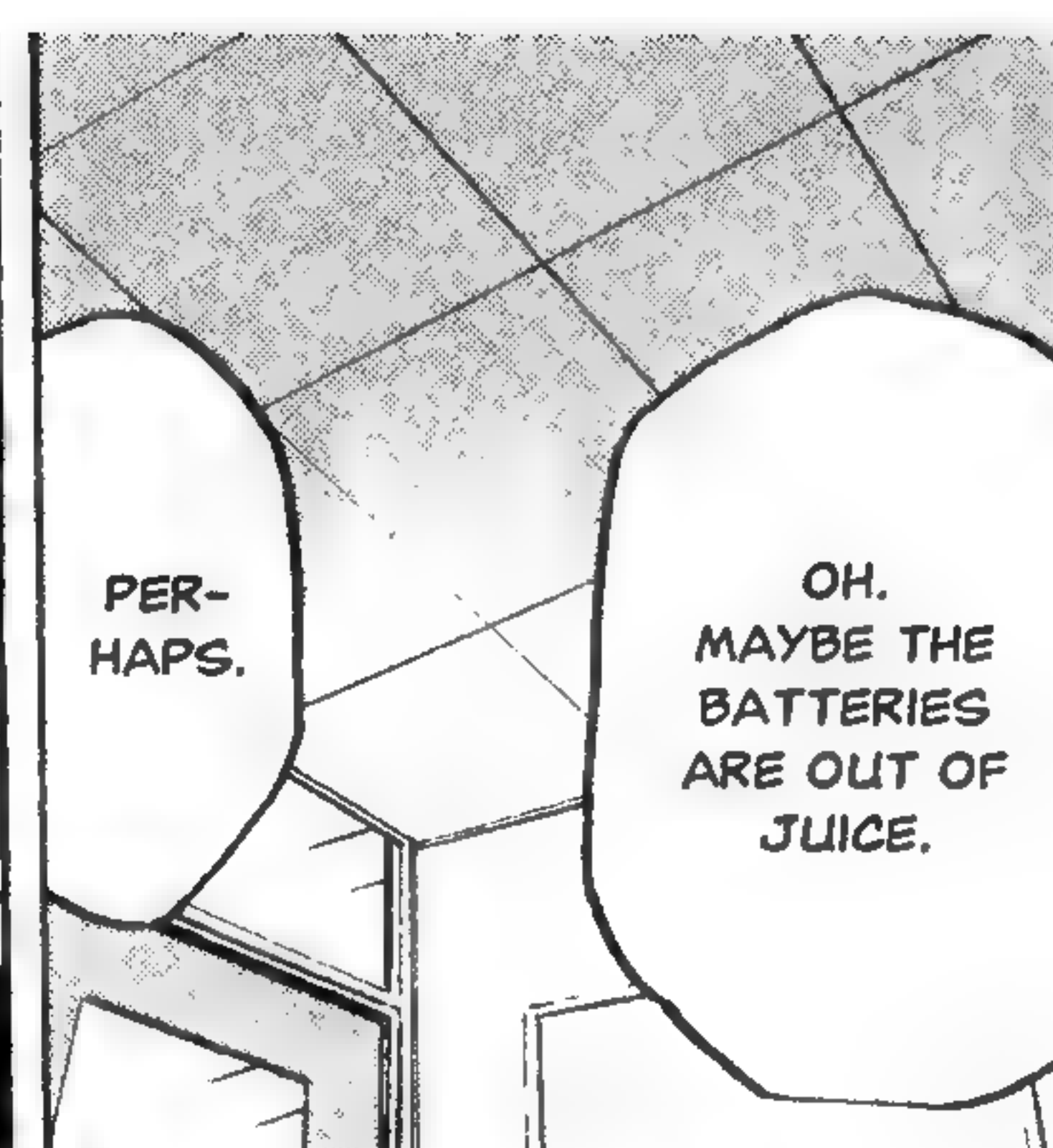
I
ALREADY
HAVE.
MANY
TIMES.



COME
ON, BOSS.
HURRY UP
AND PUSH
IT.

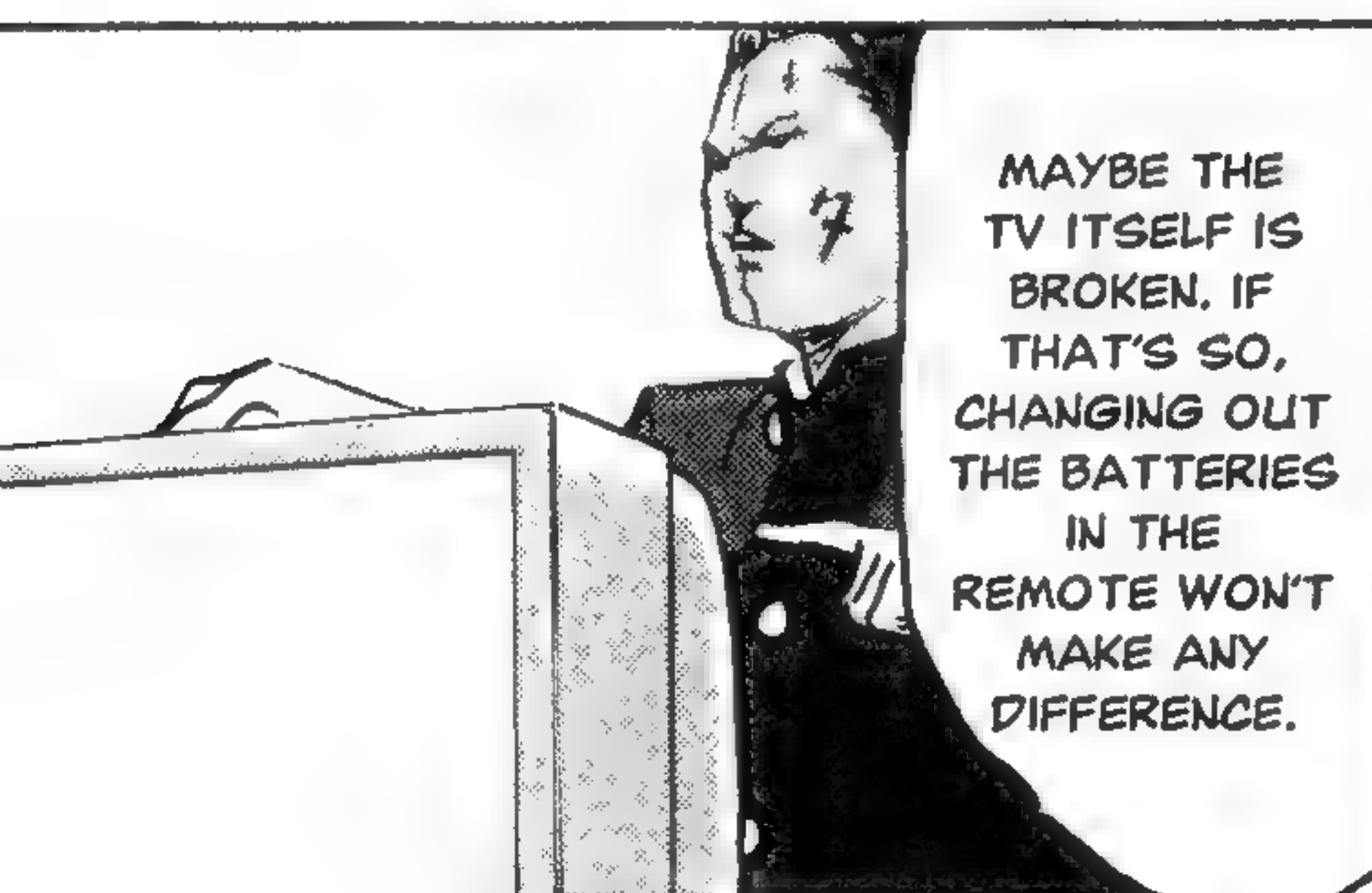


BUT
FIRST
...

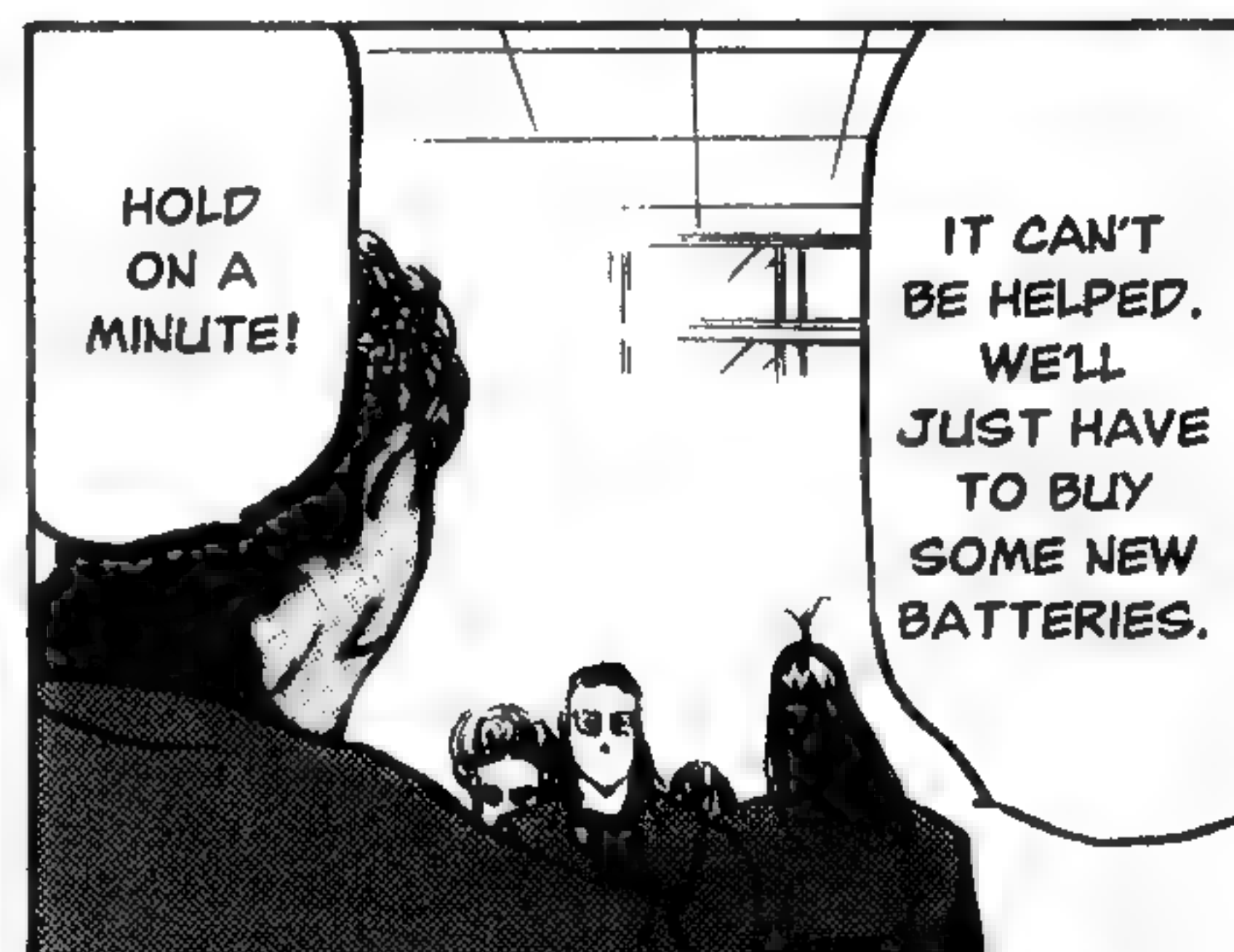


PER-
HAPS.

OH.
MAYBE THE
BATTERIES
ARE OUT OF
JUICE.



MAYBE THE
TV ITSELF IS
BROKEN. IF
THAT'S SO,
CHANGING OUT
THE BATTERIES
IN THE
REMOTE WON'T
MAKE ANY
DIFFERENCE.



HOLD
ON A
MINUTE!

IT CAN'T
BE HELPED.
WE'LL
JUST HAVE
TO BUY
SOME NEW
BATTERIES.

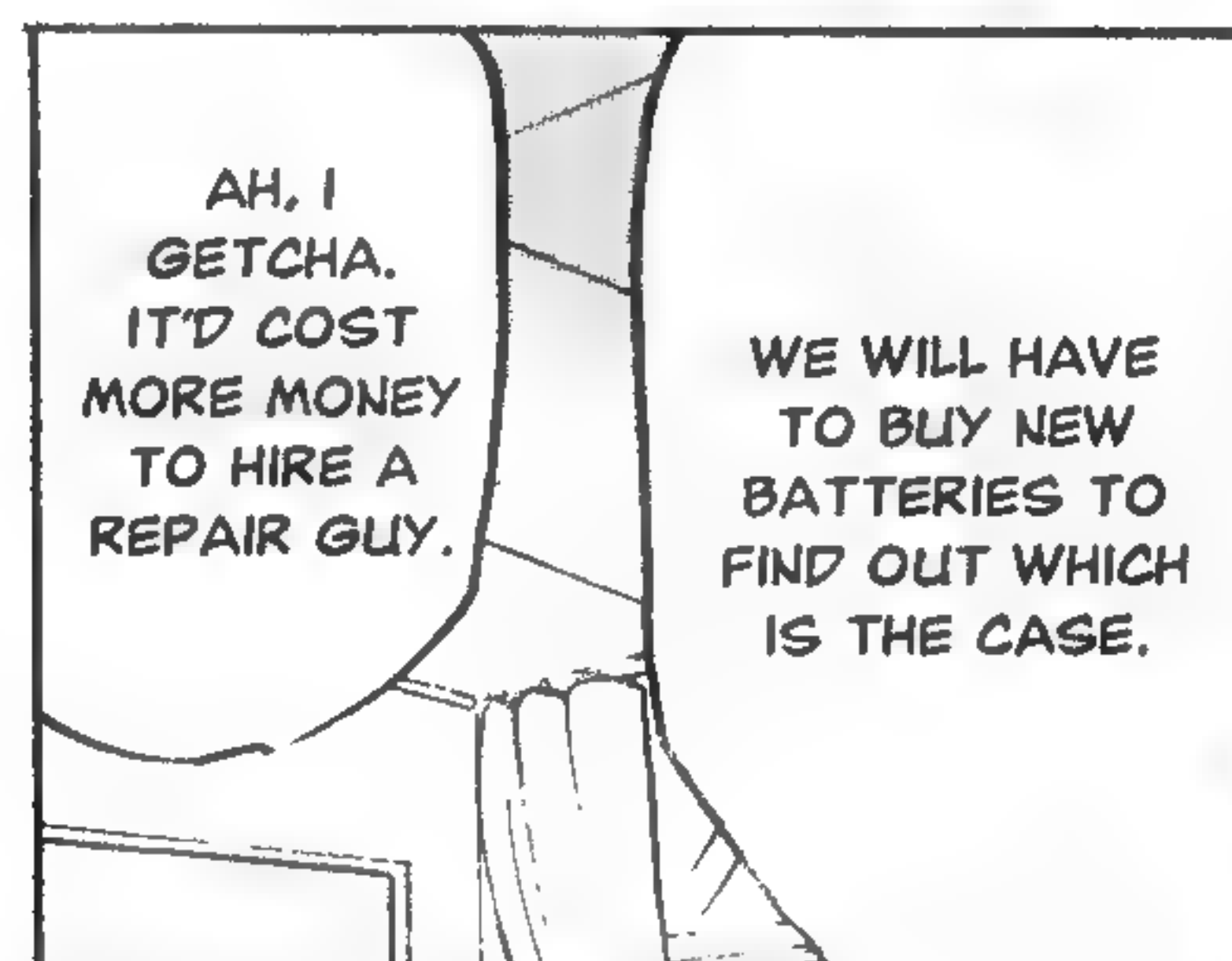


IT
SEEMS
LIKE EVERY-
ONE DOES.
I WONDER
IF IT
ACTUALLY
WORKS.

I-I DO
THAT!

BOSS, YOU
DO THAT
TOO?!

I WILL
GIVE THEM
A LITTLE
TURN.



AH, I
GETCHA.
IT'D COST
MORE MONEY
TO HIRE A
REPAIR GUY.

WE WILL HAVE
TO BUY NEW
BATTERIES TO
FIND OUT WHICH
IS THE CASE.



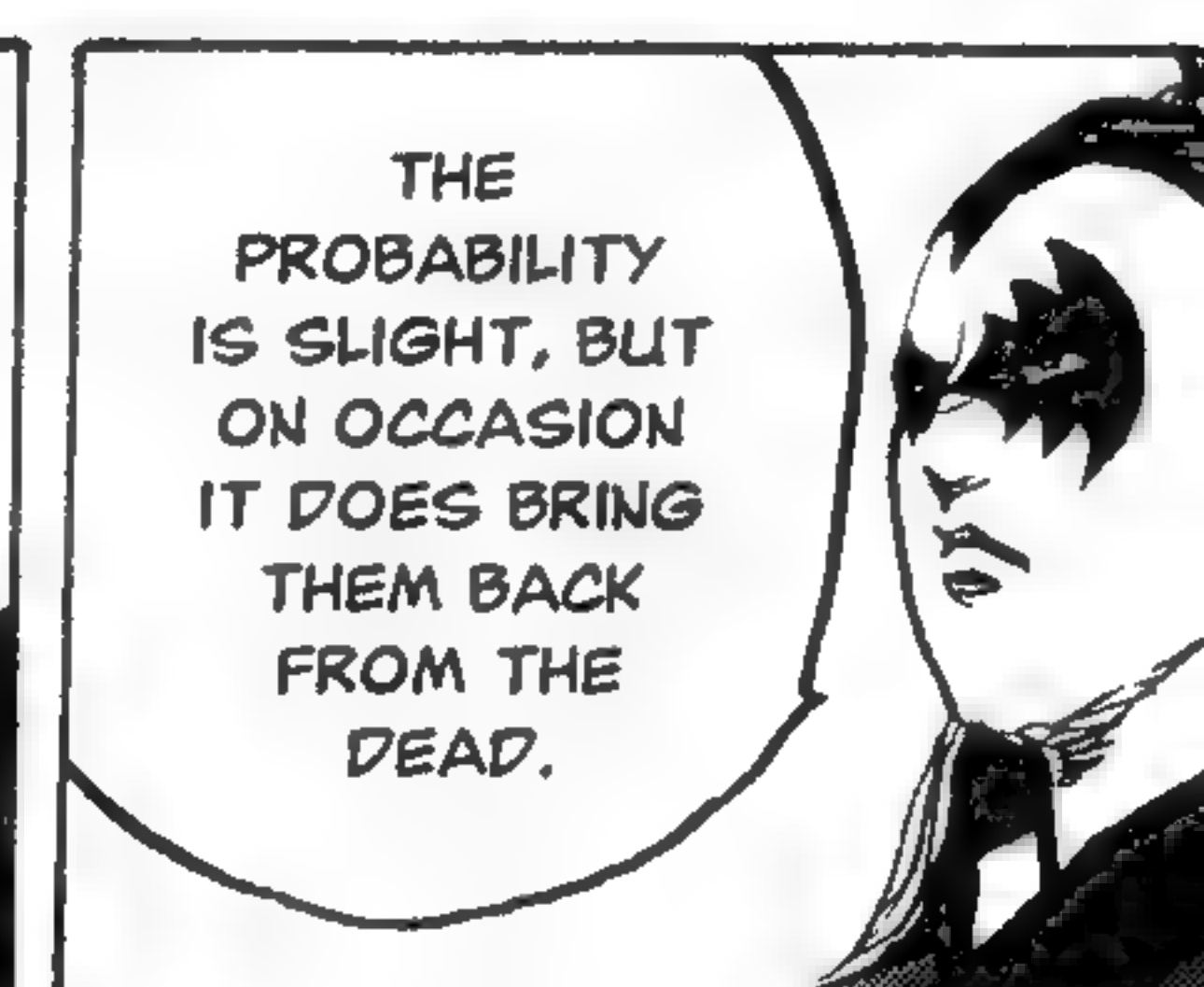
YES,
THESE ARE
POSSI-
BILITIES.
HOWEVER...

ALSO, THE
REMOTE
ITSELF
COULD BE
BROKEN.



WE'RE
COUNTING
ON YOU,
BOSS.

VERY
WELL,
LET'S TRY
AGAIN.



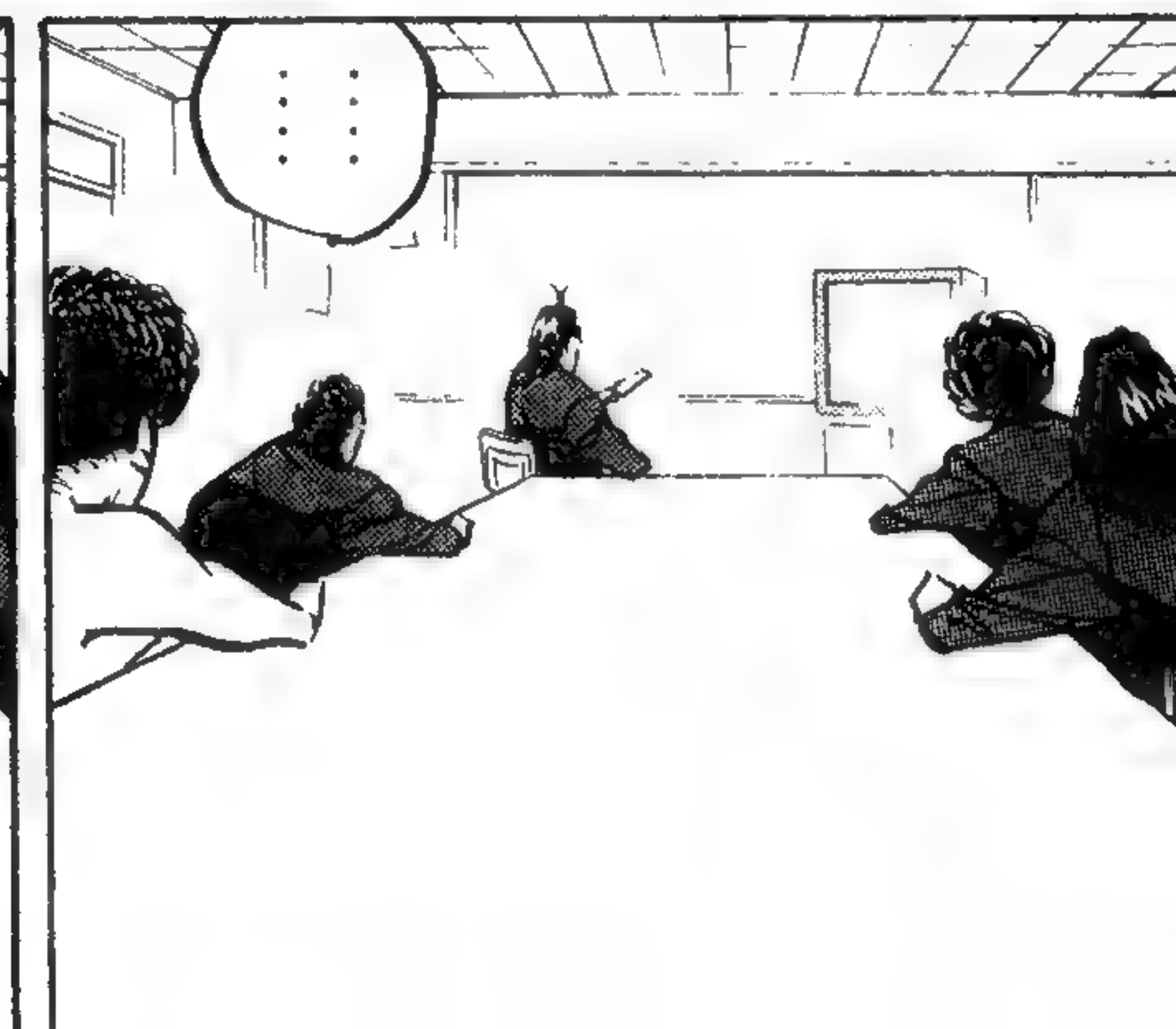
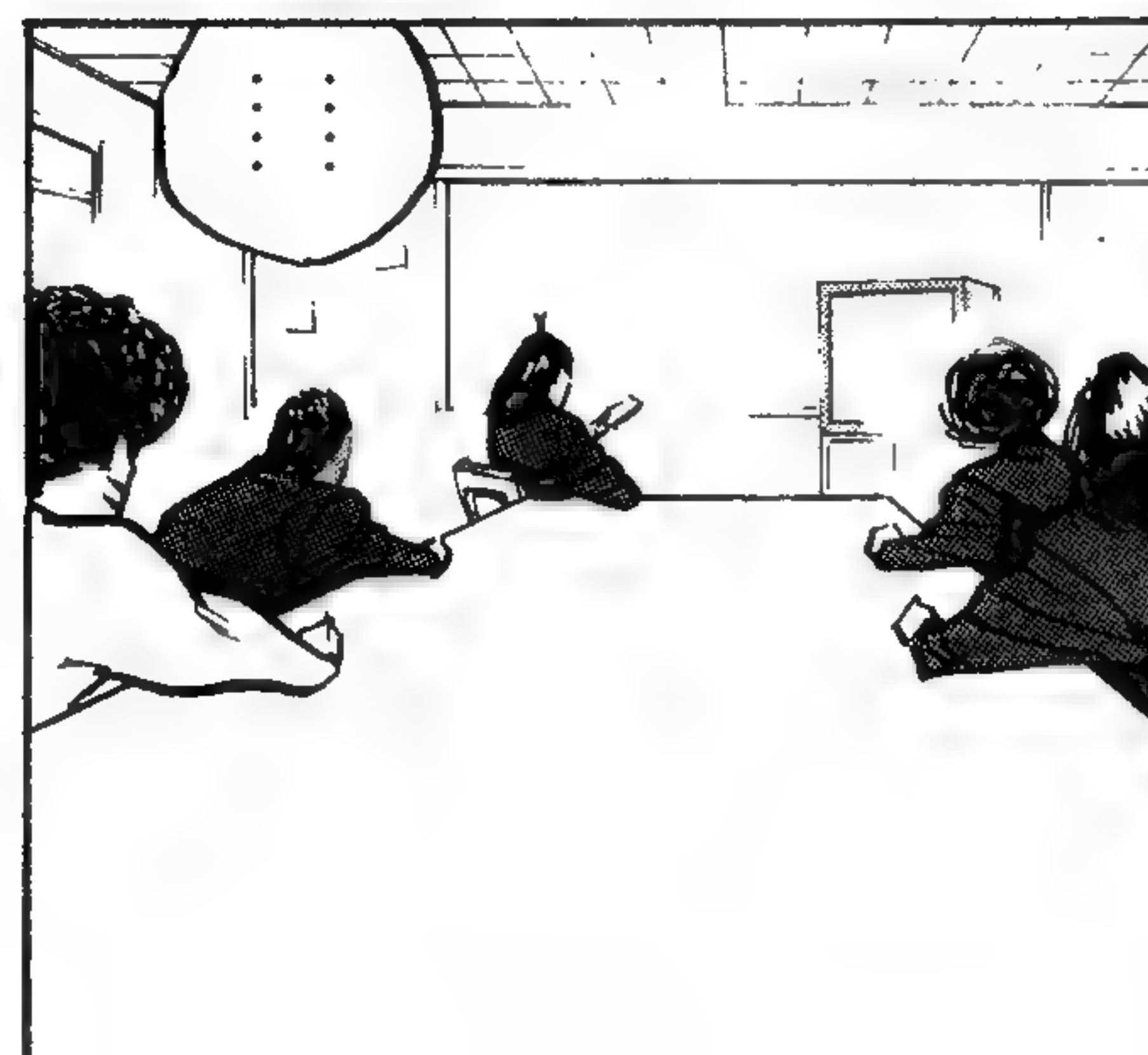
THE
PROBABILITY
IS SLIGHT, BUT
ON OCCASION
IT DOES BRING
THEM BACK
FROM THE
DEAD.



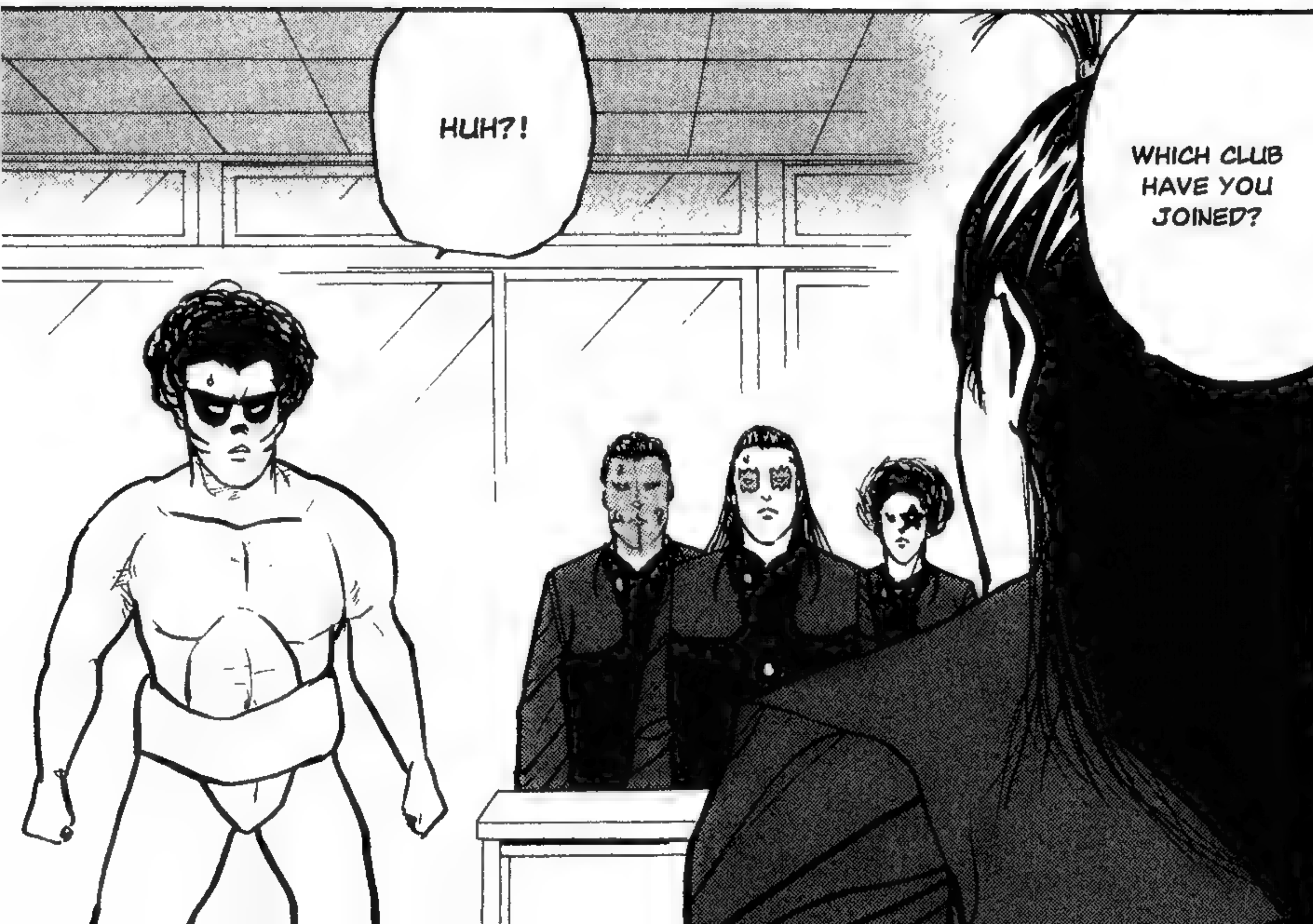
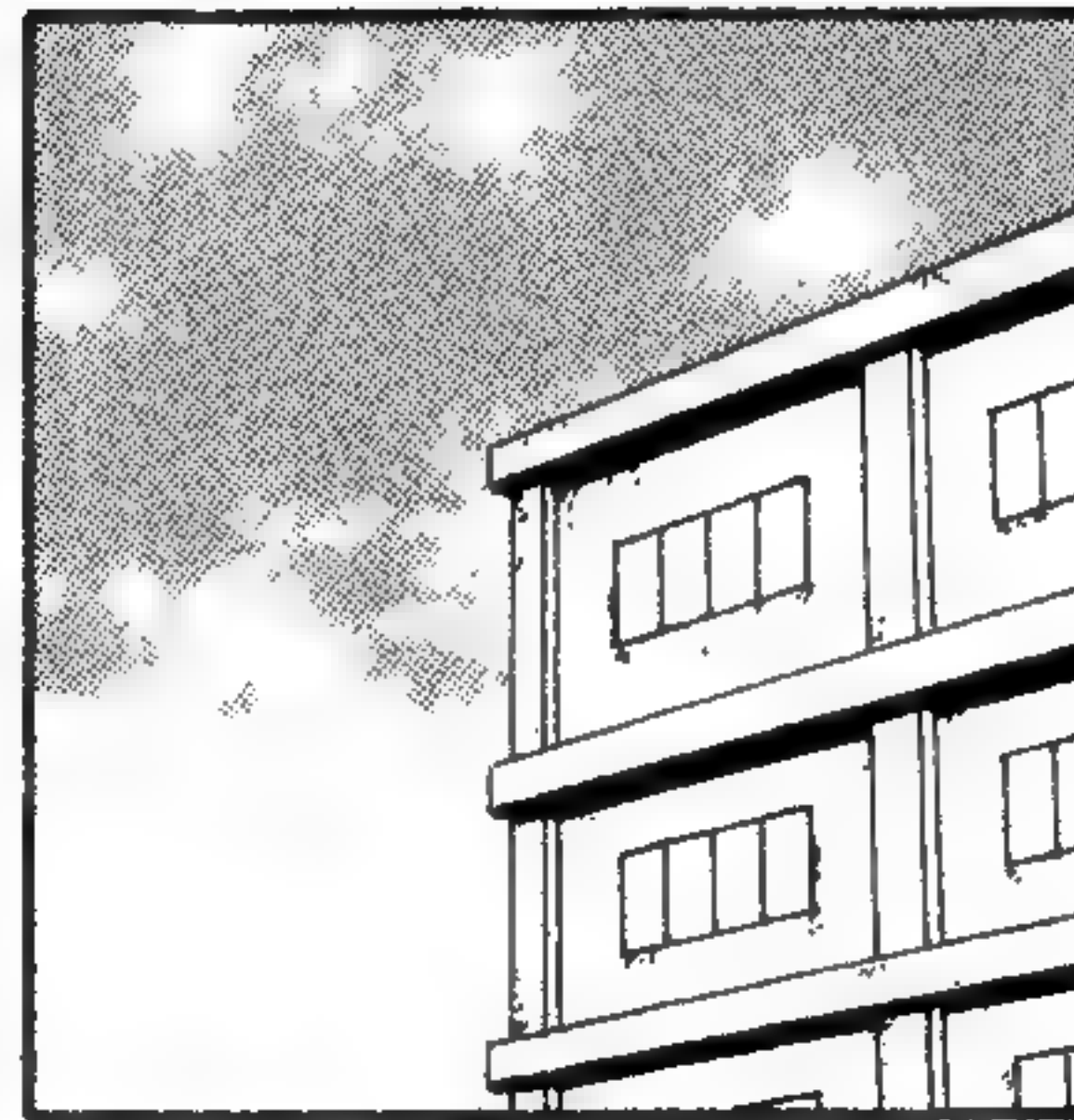
SURE,
LEAVE IT
TO ME.



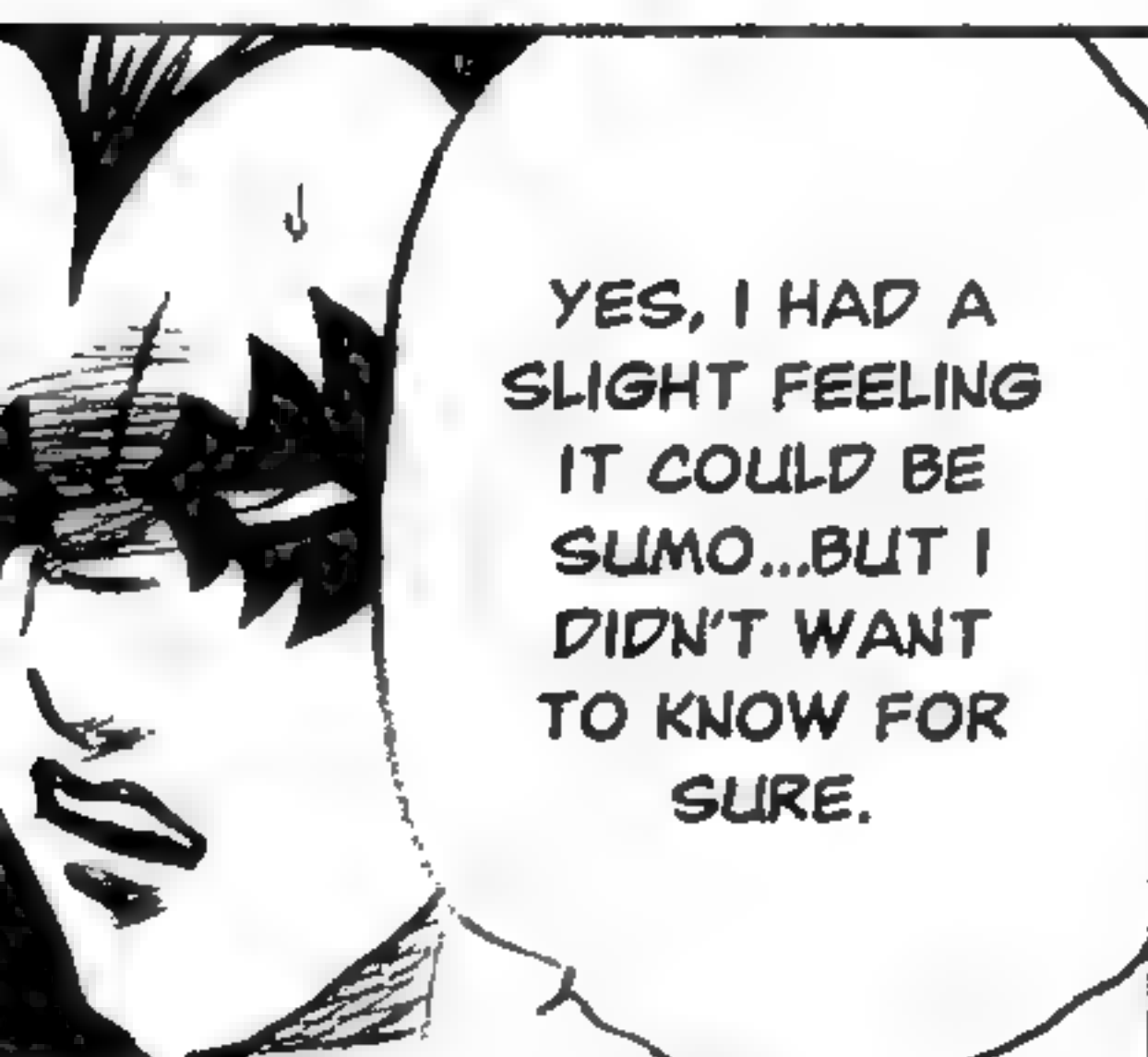
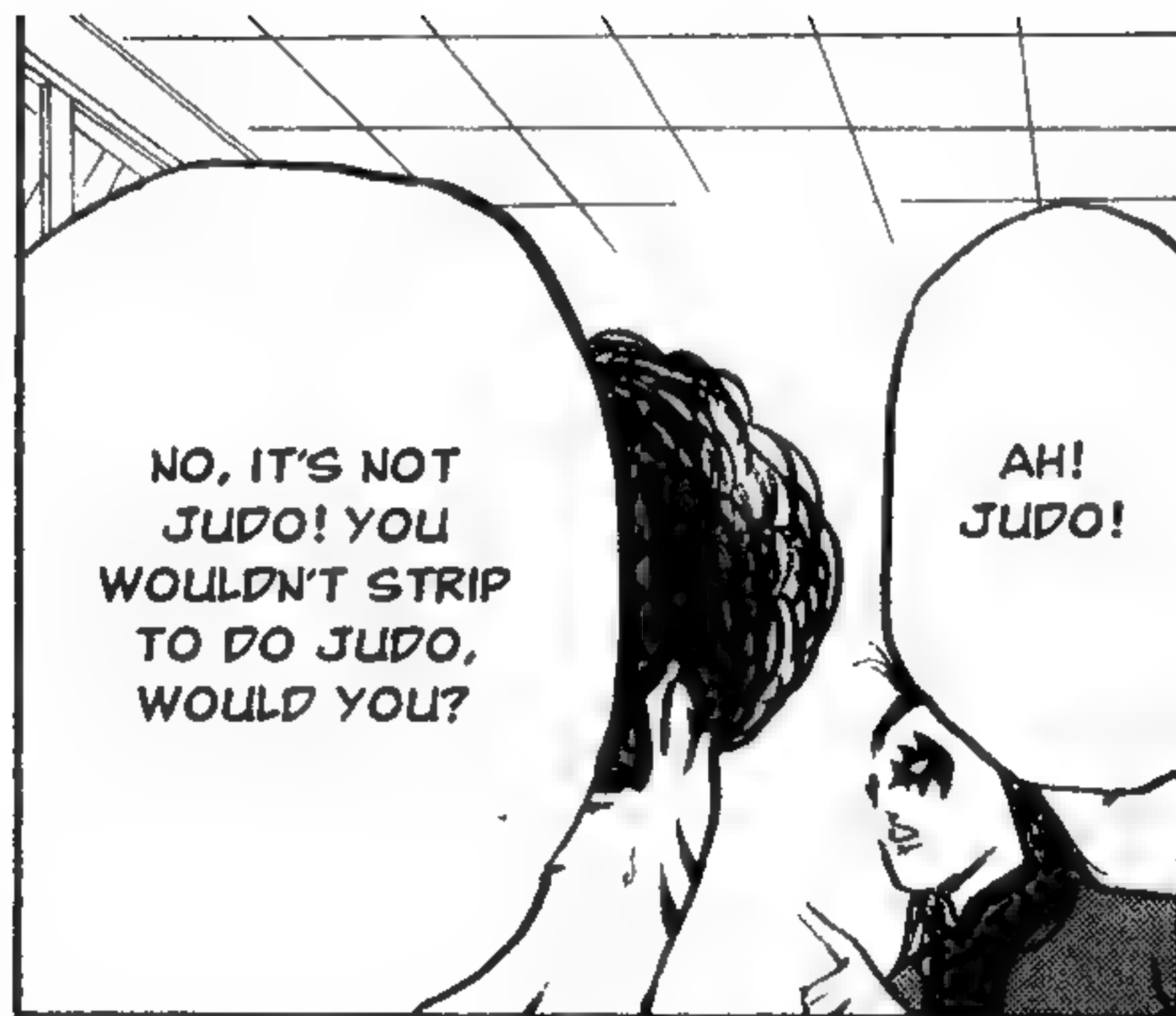
WOULD YOU
PLEASE GO
BUY SOME
BATTERIES?

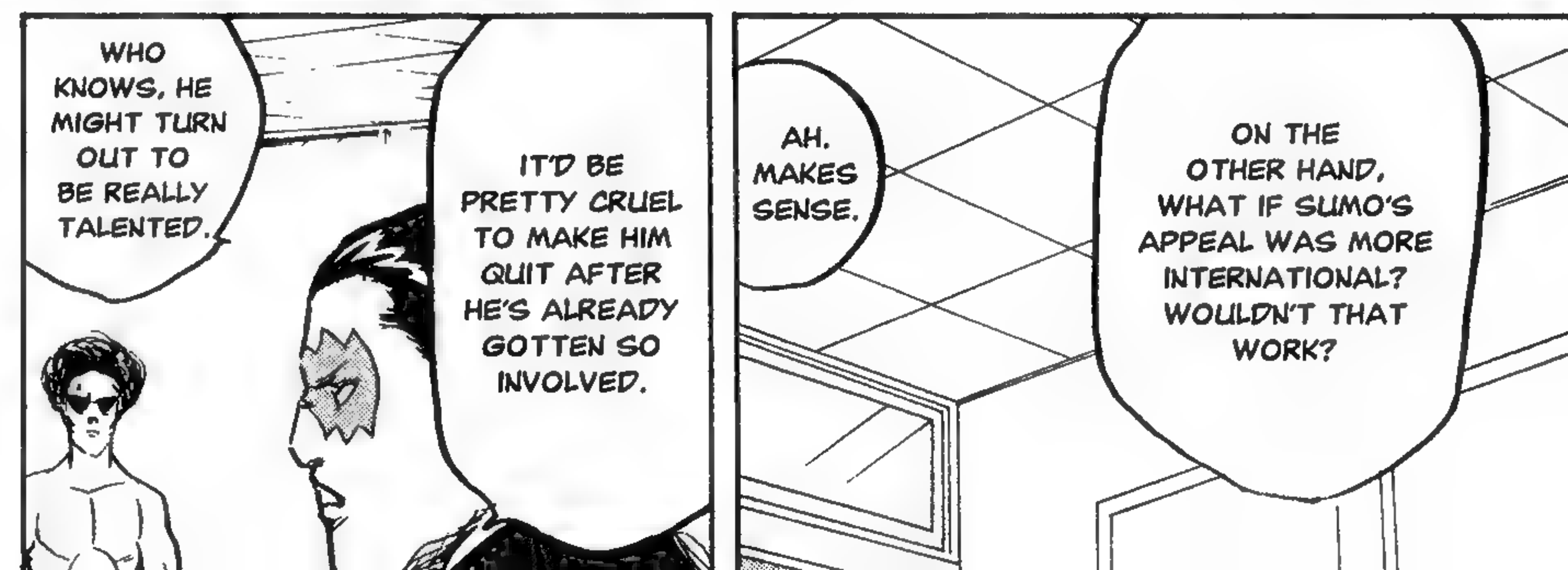
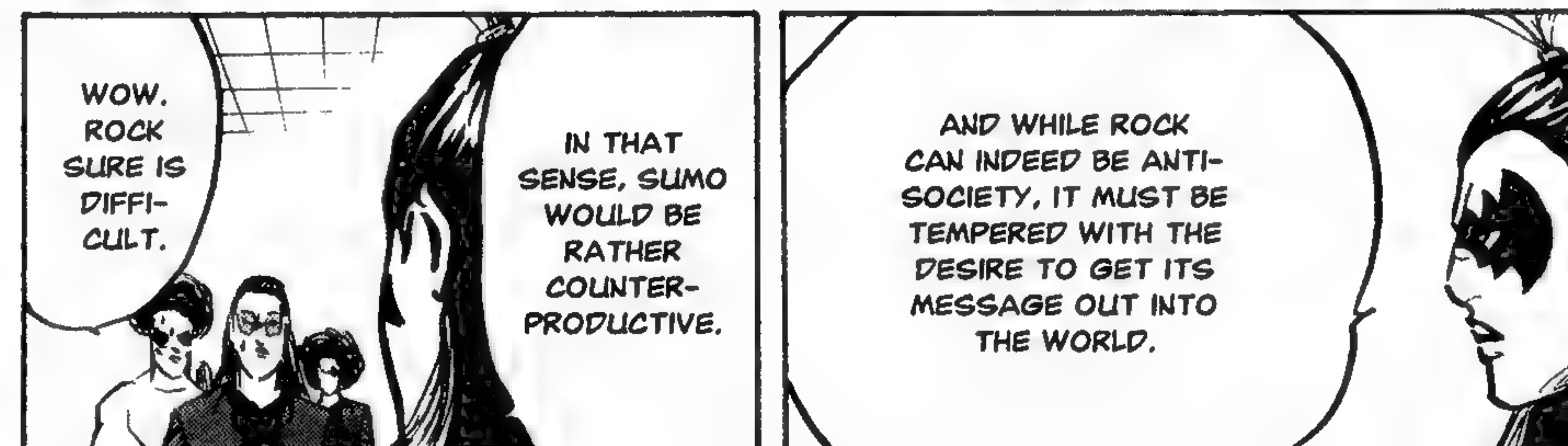
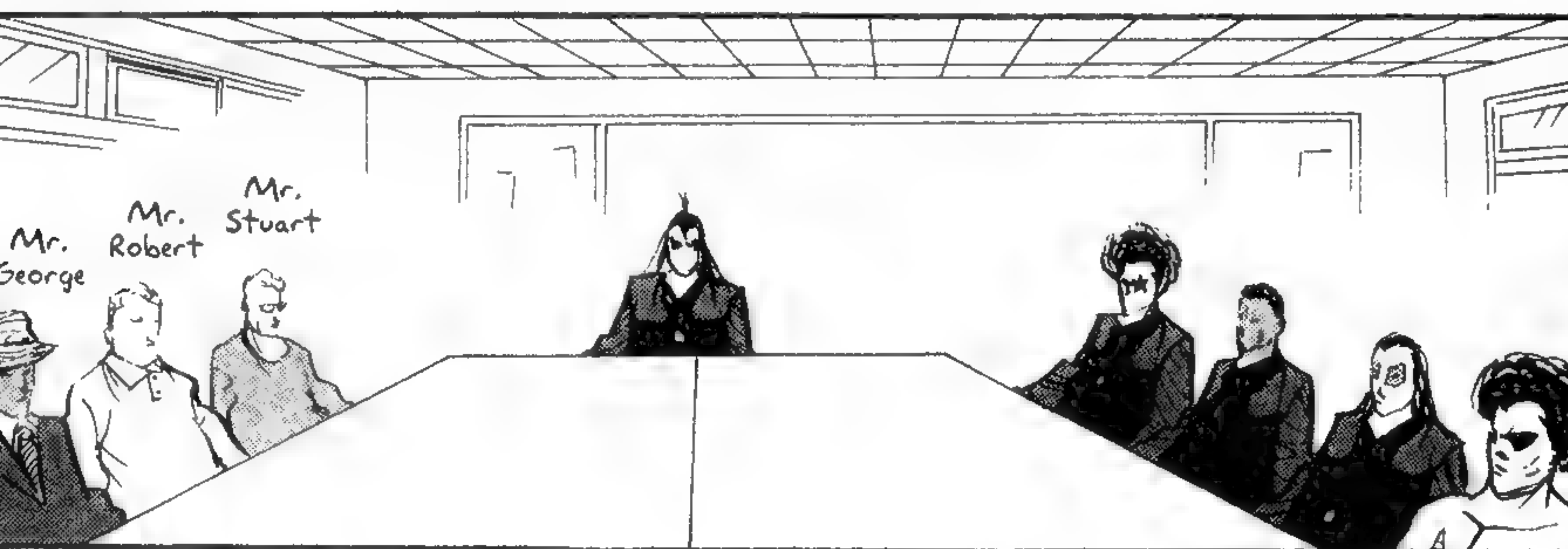
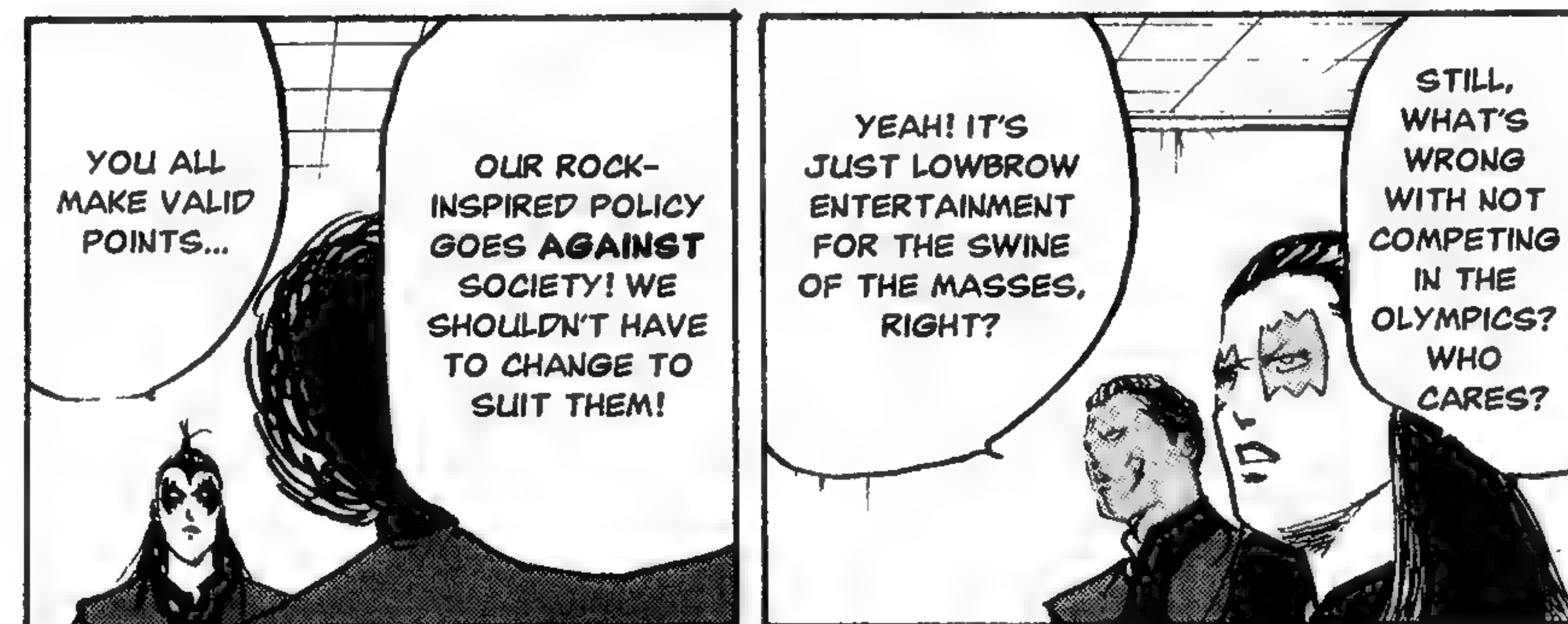
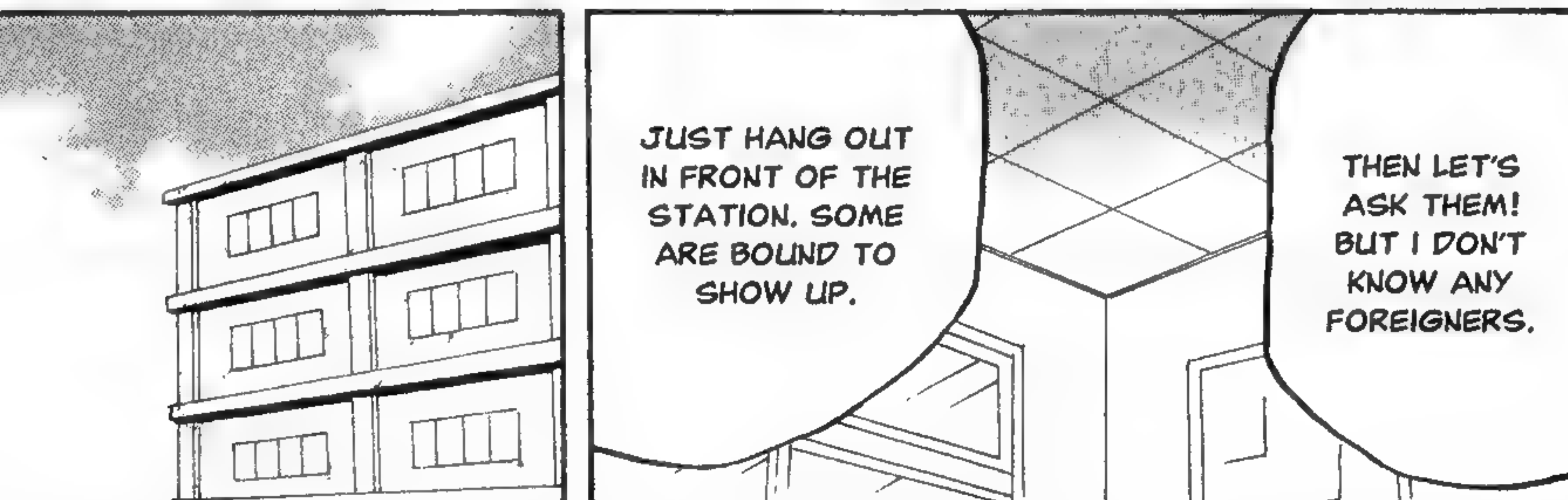
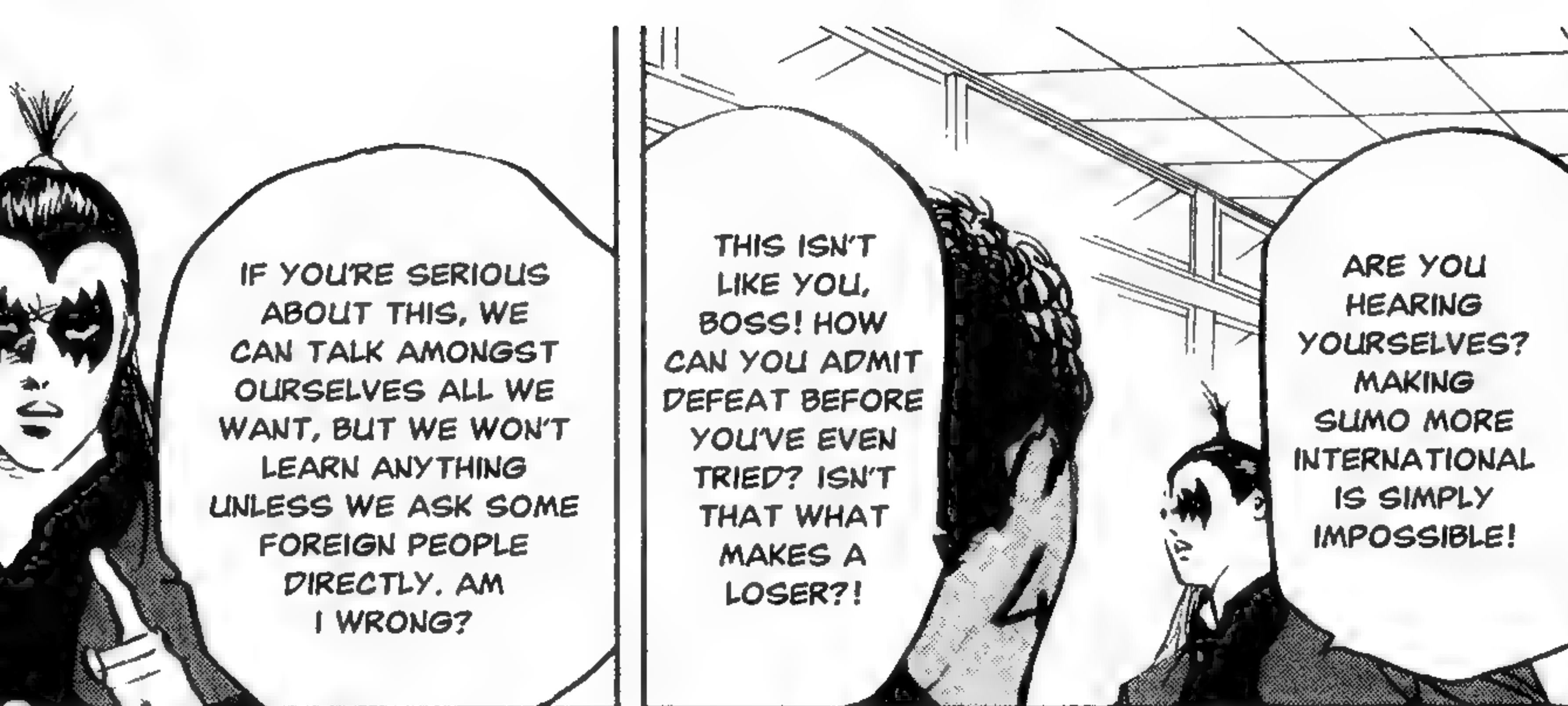


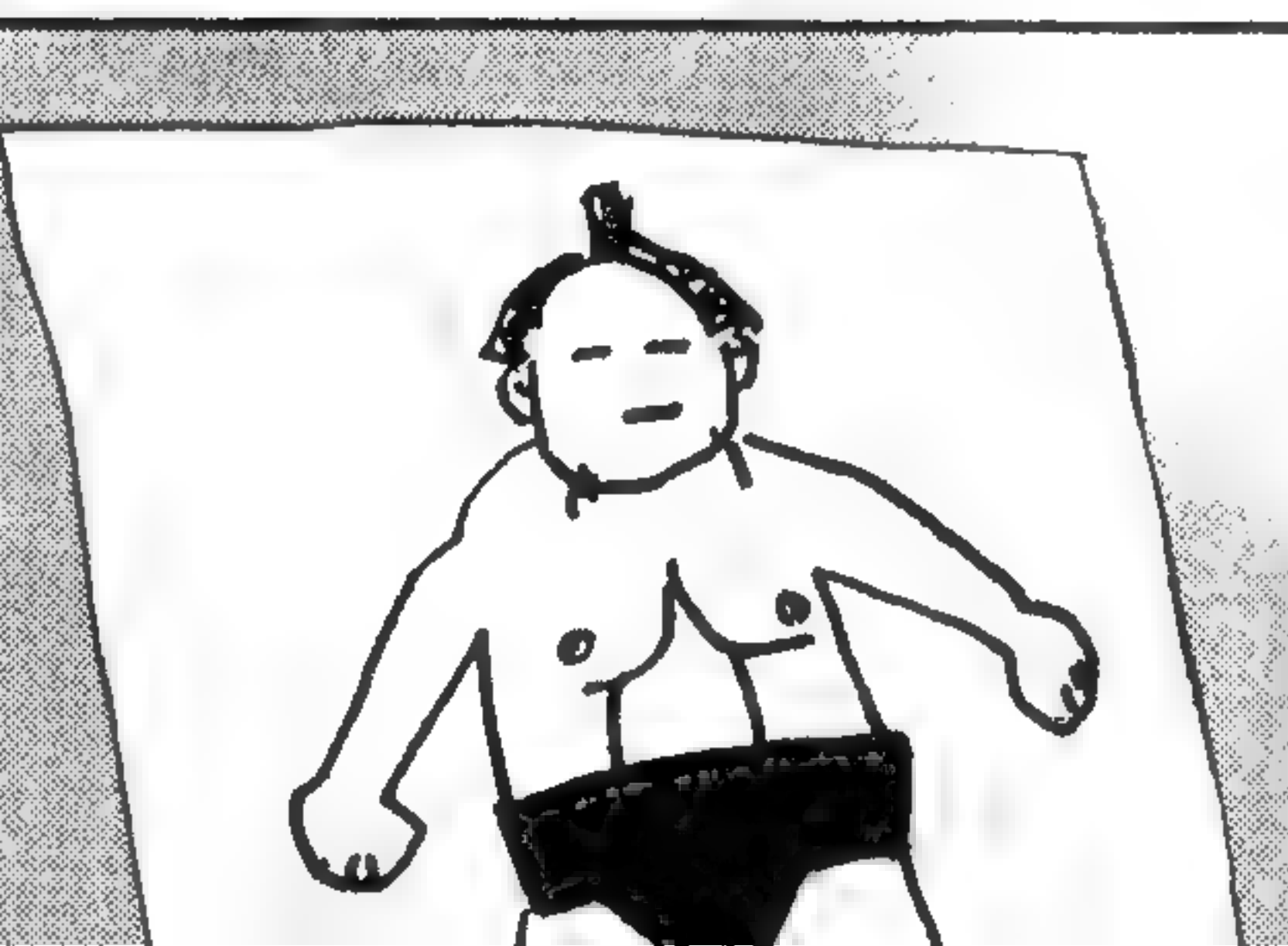
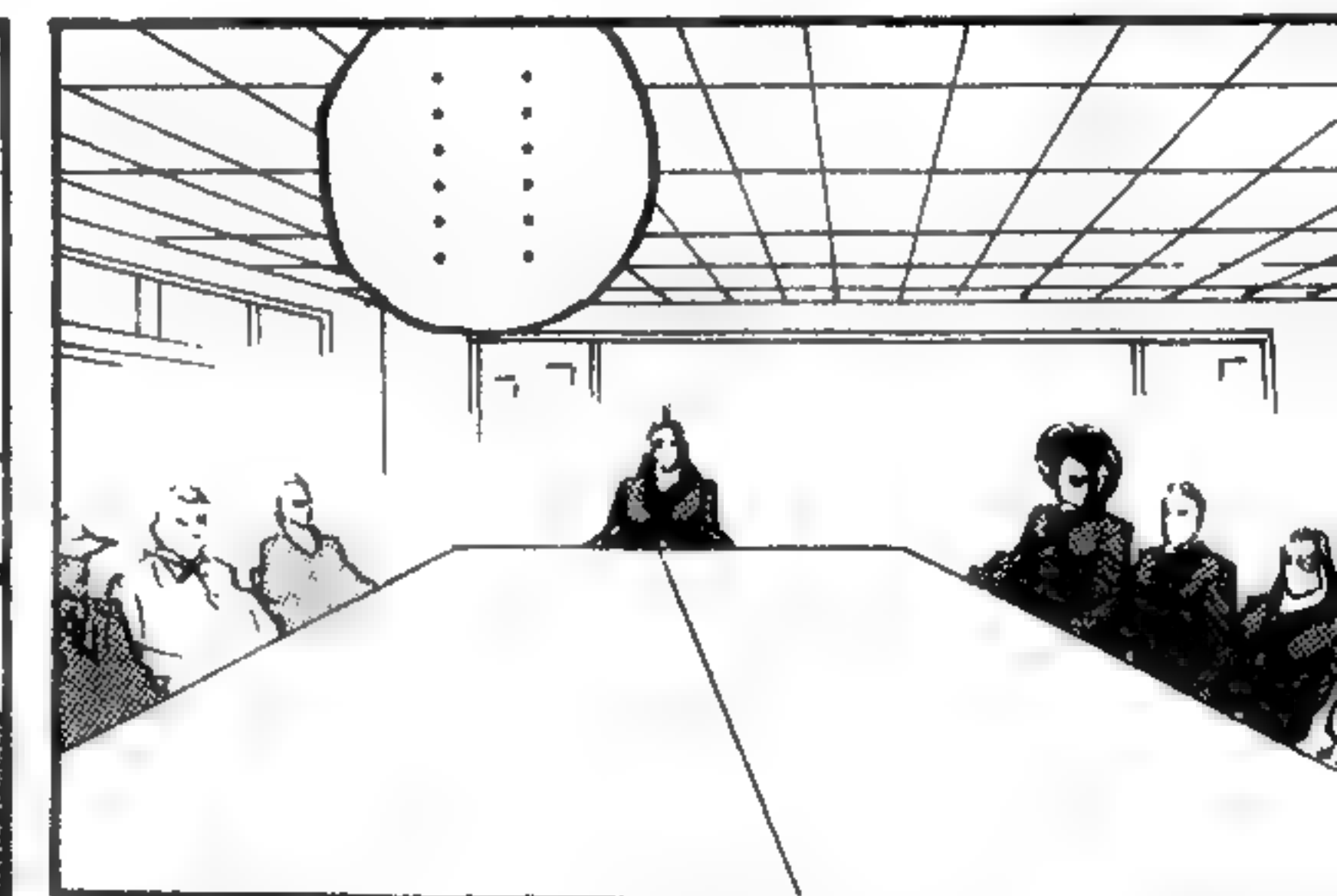
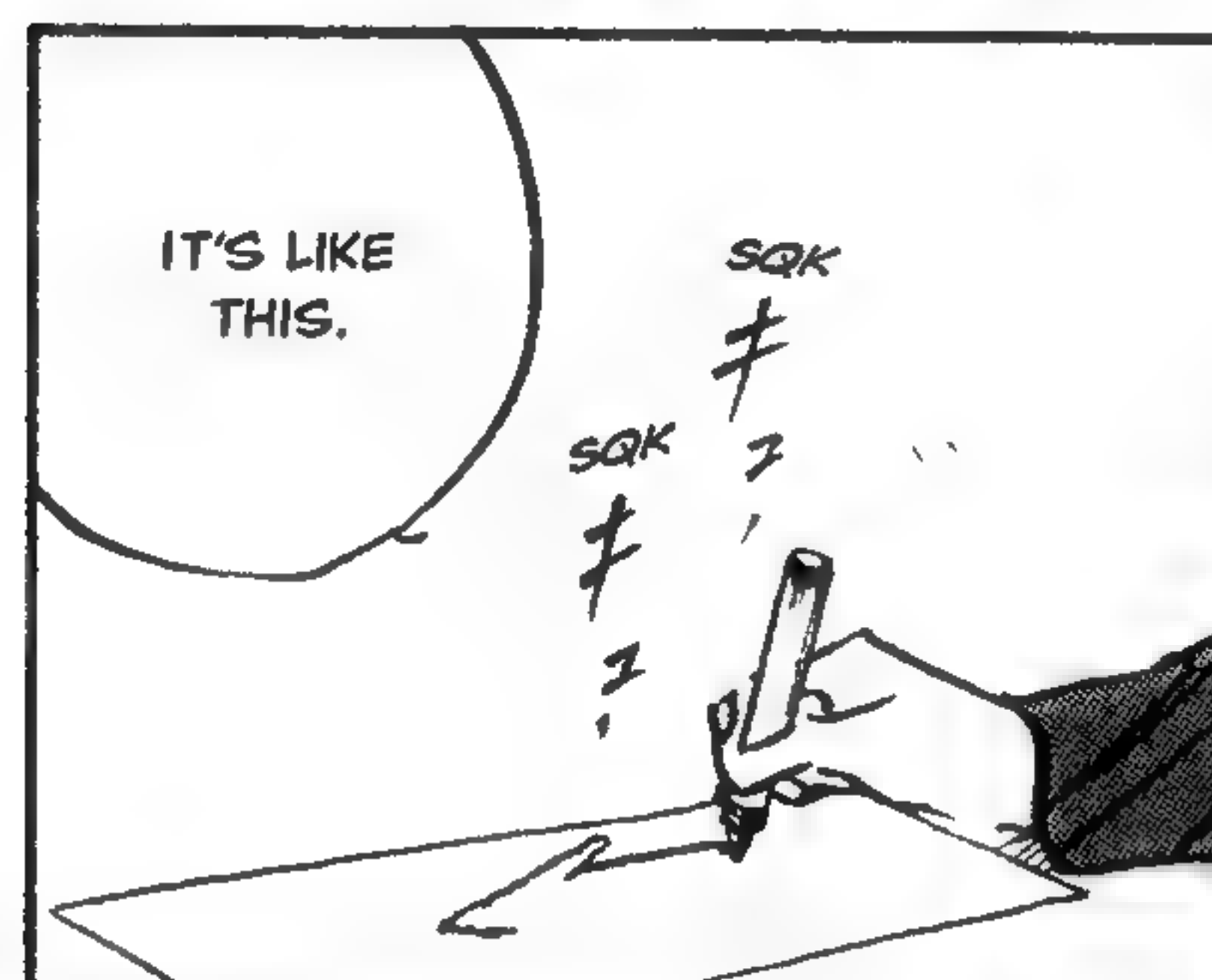
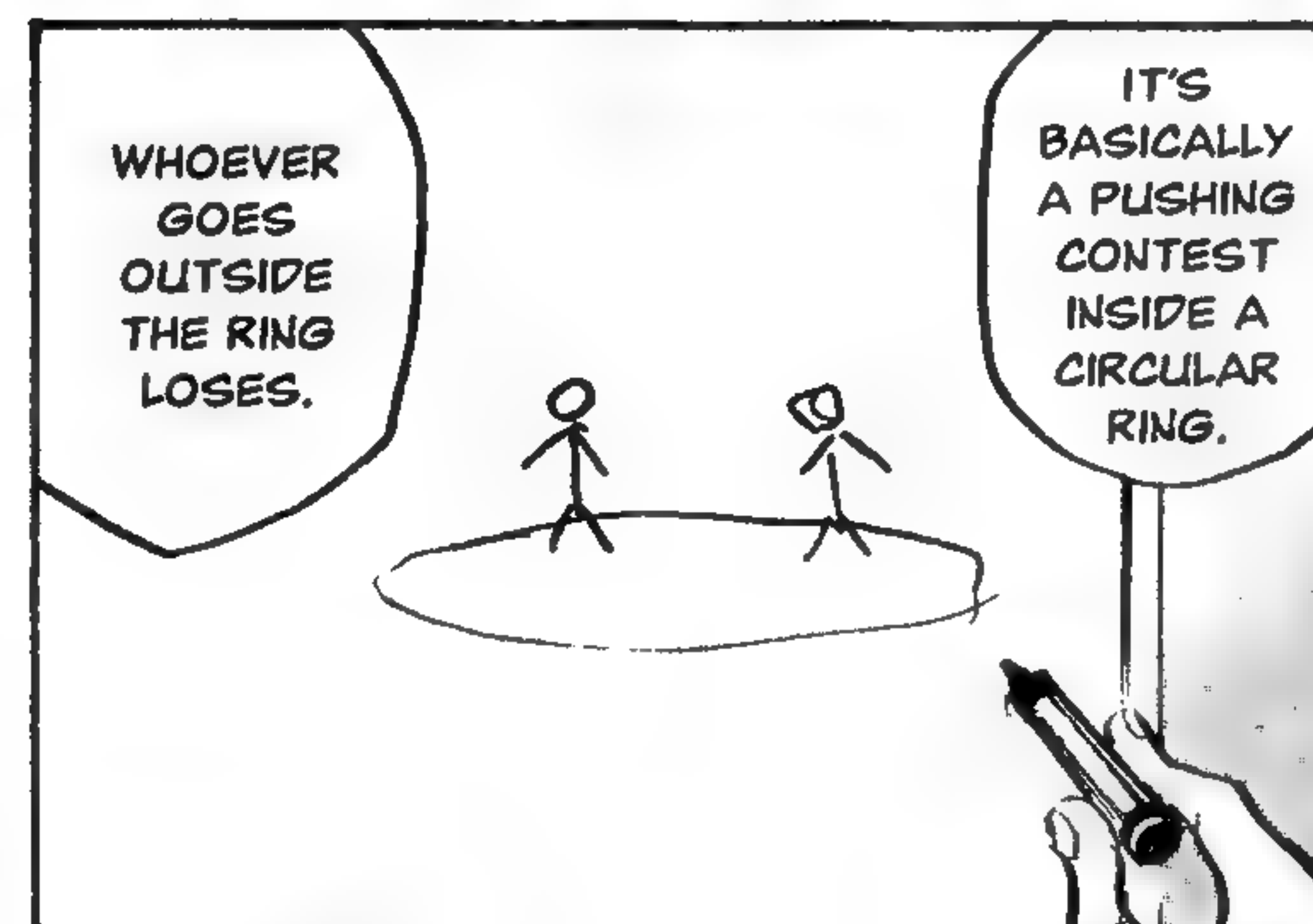
CHAPTER 250: OUT IN THE WORLD

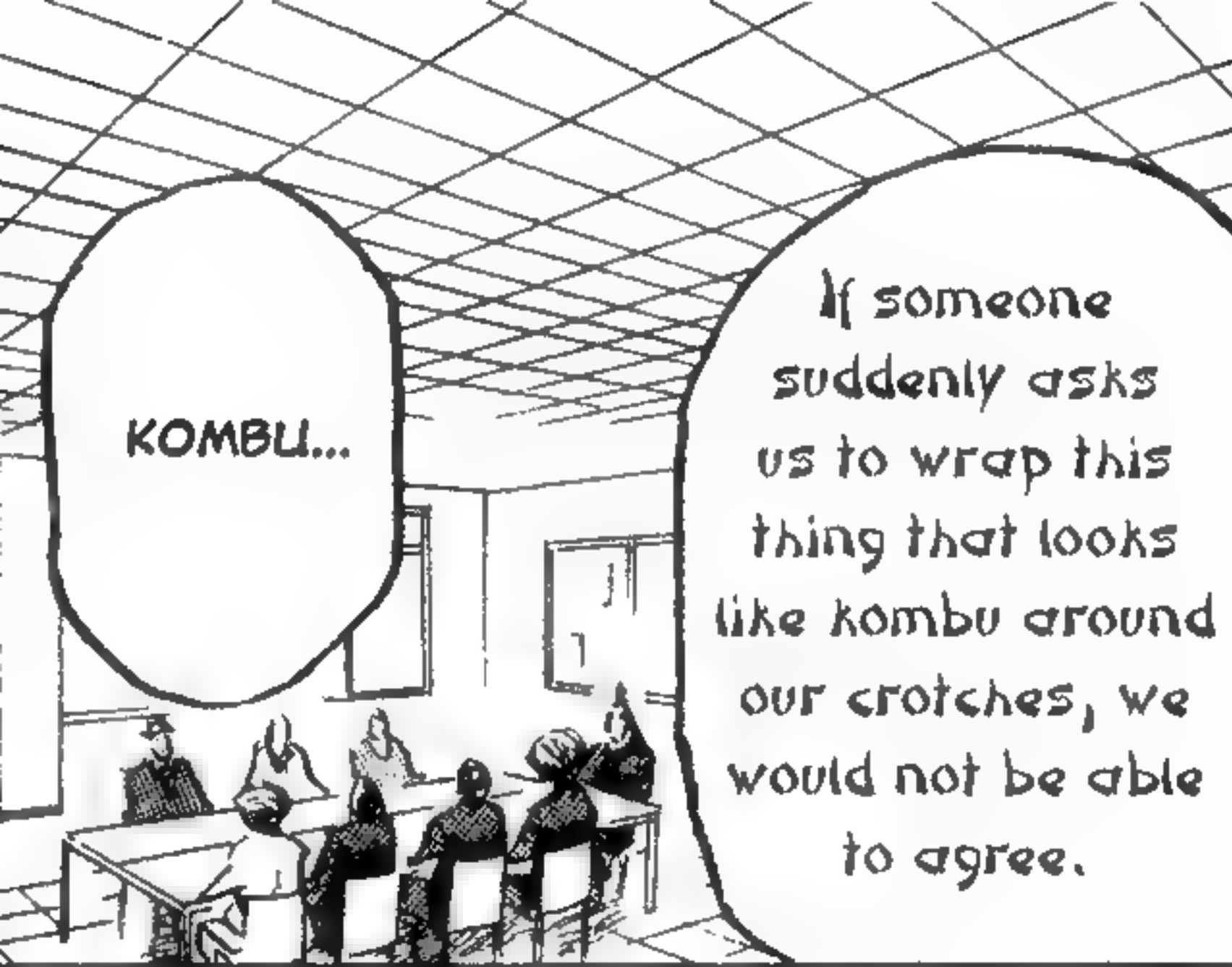


WHAT HAPPENED TO THE TOPIC OF TELEVISION?







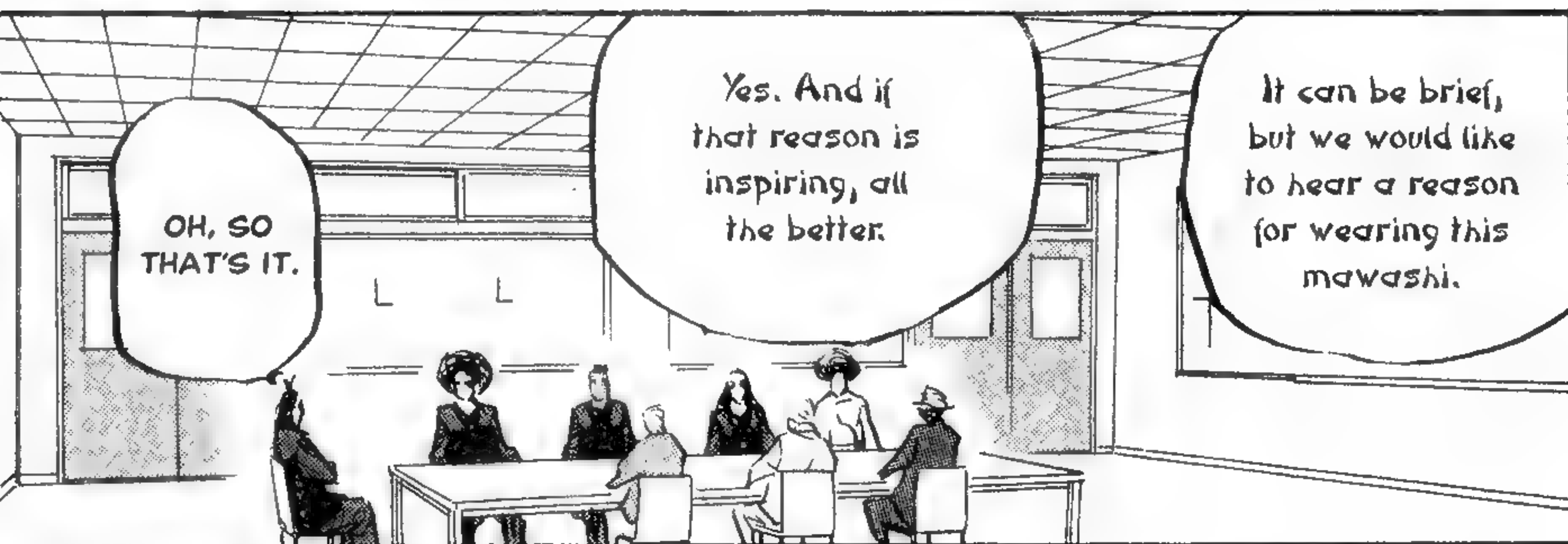


KOMBU...

If someone suddenly asks us to wrap this thing that looks like kombu around our crotches, we would not be able to agree.



This is to hide a very important area, yes? But it's just a piece of cloth. This makes us uneasy.



OH, SO THAT'S IT.

Yes. And if that reason is inspiring, all the better.

It can be brief, but we would like to hear a reason for wearing this mawashi.



JUST LEAVE IT TO ME. WE'VE ALREADY COME THIS FAR-- THERE'S NO GOING BACK NOW!



WHAT?! COME ON, BOSS. THAT CAN'T BE RIGHT!

FINE. THERE IS SUCH A REASON.



VERY WELL. I WILL NOW BEGIN.



Fine. Let us reserve judgment until we've heard this story.

Ah! Yes, tell us!

THE MAWASHI HAS AN ORIGIN STEEPED IN TRADITION. PLEASE LISTEN CLOSELY.



WHAT? REALLY?!

That's right.

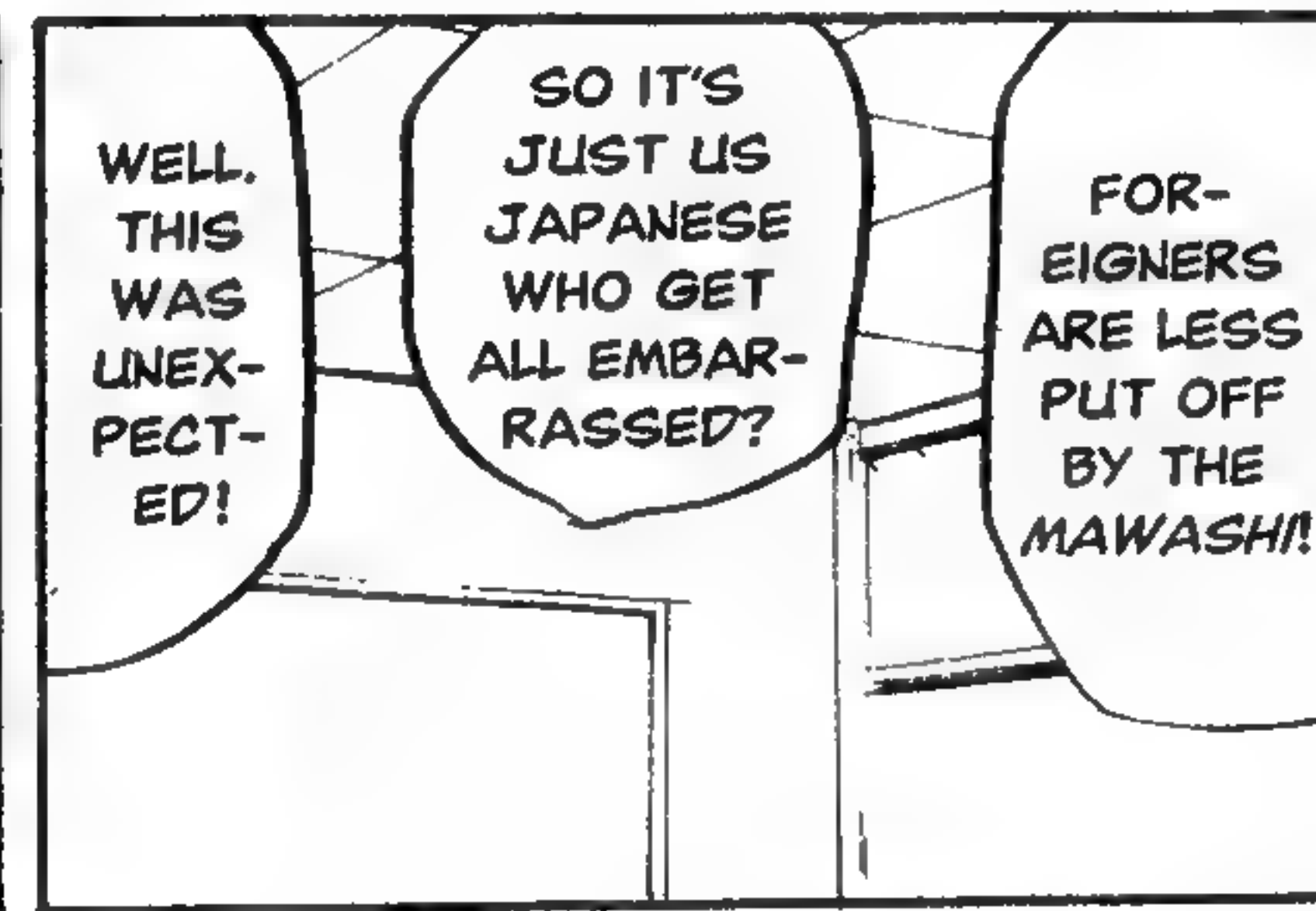
No, not especially.



THERE YOU HAVE IT. IT REPULSES YOU, DOESN'T IT?



SO THERE'S NO PROBLEM! SUMO CAN BECOME AN INTERNATIONAL SPORT!



WELL. THIS WAS UNEXPECTED!

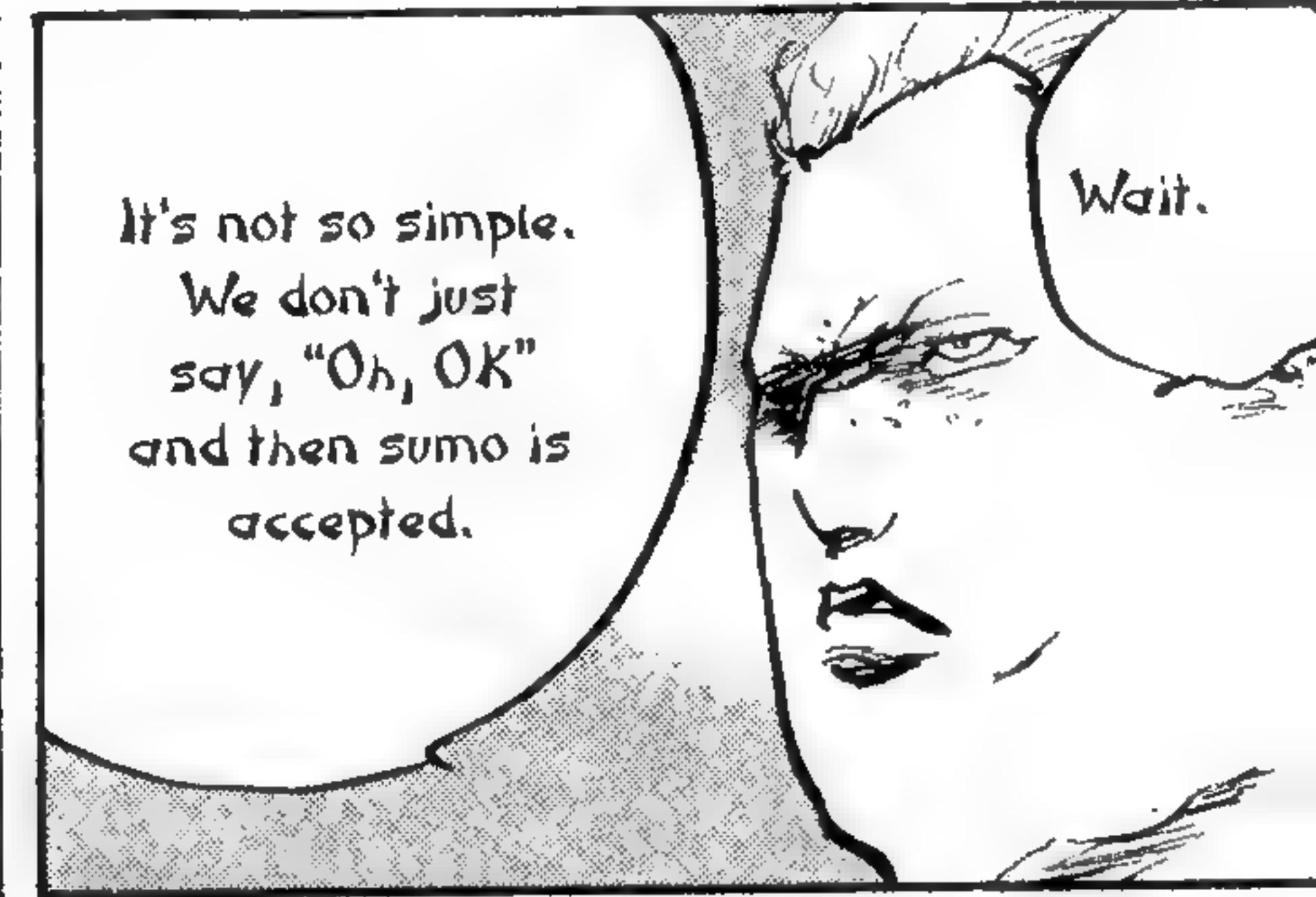
SO IT'S JUST US JAPANESE WHO GET ALL EMBARRASSED?

FOR- EIGNERS ARE LESS PUT OFF BY THE MAWASHI!



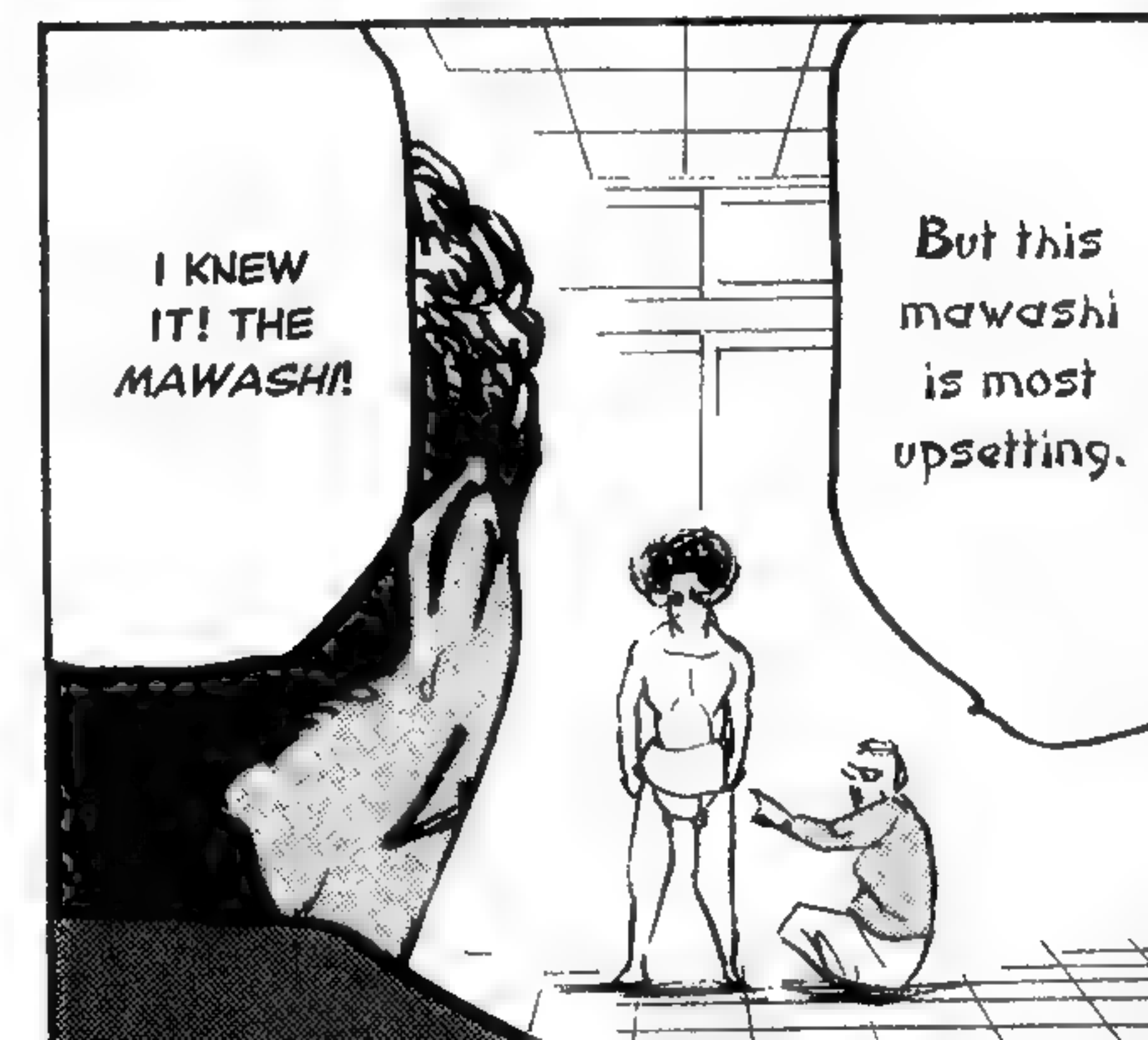
OH. Y-YOU DON'T SAY.

The world isn't that naive.



It's not so simple. We don't just say, "Oh, OK" and then sumo is accepted.

Wait.



I KNEW IT! THE MAWASHI!

But this mawashi is most upsetting.



THE TOPKNOT. IT'S NOT BAD, HUH?

Let us assume for now that the topknot is OK.



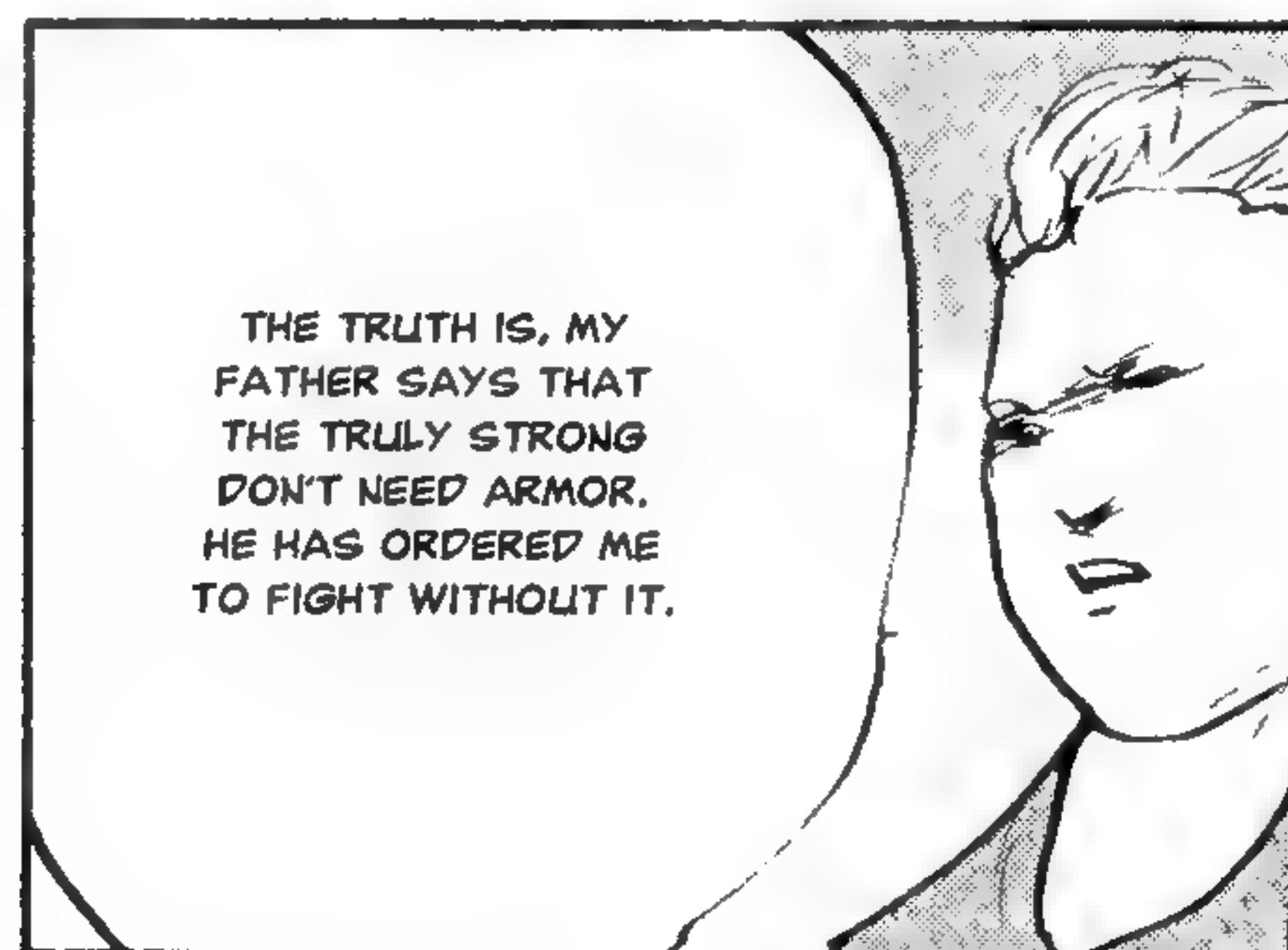
TAKE THIS.
IT IS A
SUIT OF
THE FINEST
ARMOR.

HE DECIDED
TO PRESENT
THE
YOUTH WITH
A SUIT OF
ARMOR.



THAT YOUNG
MAN IS MOST
INCREDIBLE.

SEEING
THIS, THE
KING WAS
DEEPLY
MOVED.



THE TRUTH IS, MY
FATHER SAYS THAT
THE TRULY STRONG
DON'T NEED ARMOR.
HE HAS ORDERED ME
TO FIGHT WITHOUT IT.



WHAT?
WHY NOT?

SIR, I'M
DEEPLY
HONORED...
BUT I DO
NOT NEED
IT.

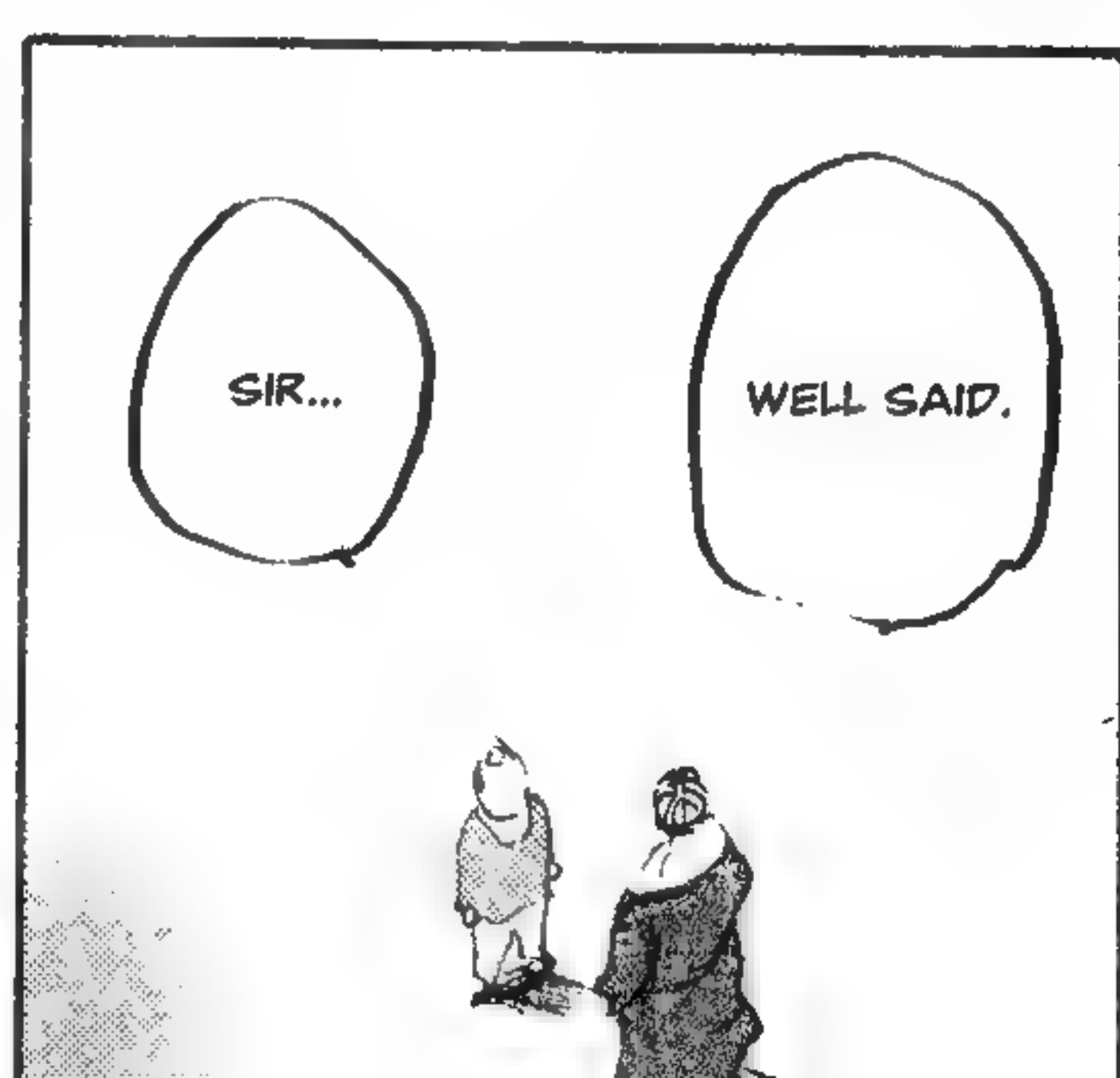


BUT I'VE ONLY
MADE IT THIS FAR
BECAUSE I WANT
TO BELIEVE THAT
WHAT HE SAYS
IS TRUE.

OF COURSE,
I KNOW MY FAMILY
CAN'T AFFORD TO BUY
A SUIT OF ARMOR,
AND MY FATHER
IS JUST MAKING
EXCUSES...



I ATTEMPT TO
SOLVE EVERYTHING
WITH MONEY. IT IS A
BAD HABIT INDEED,
AND SOMETHING I
NEED TO ADDRESS.



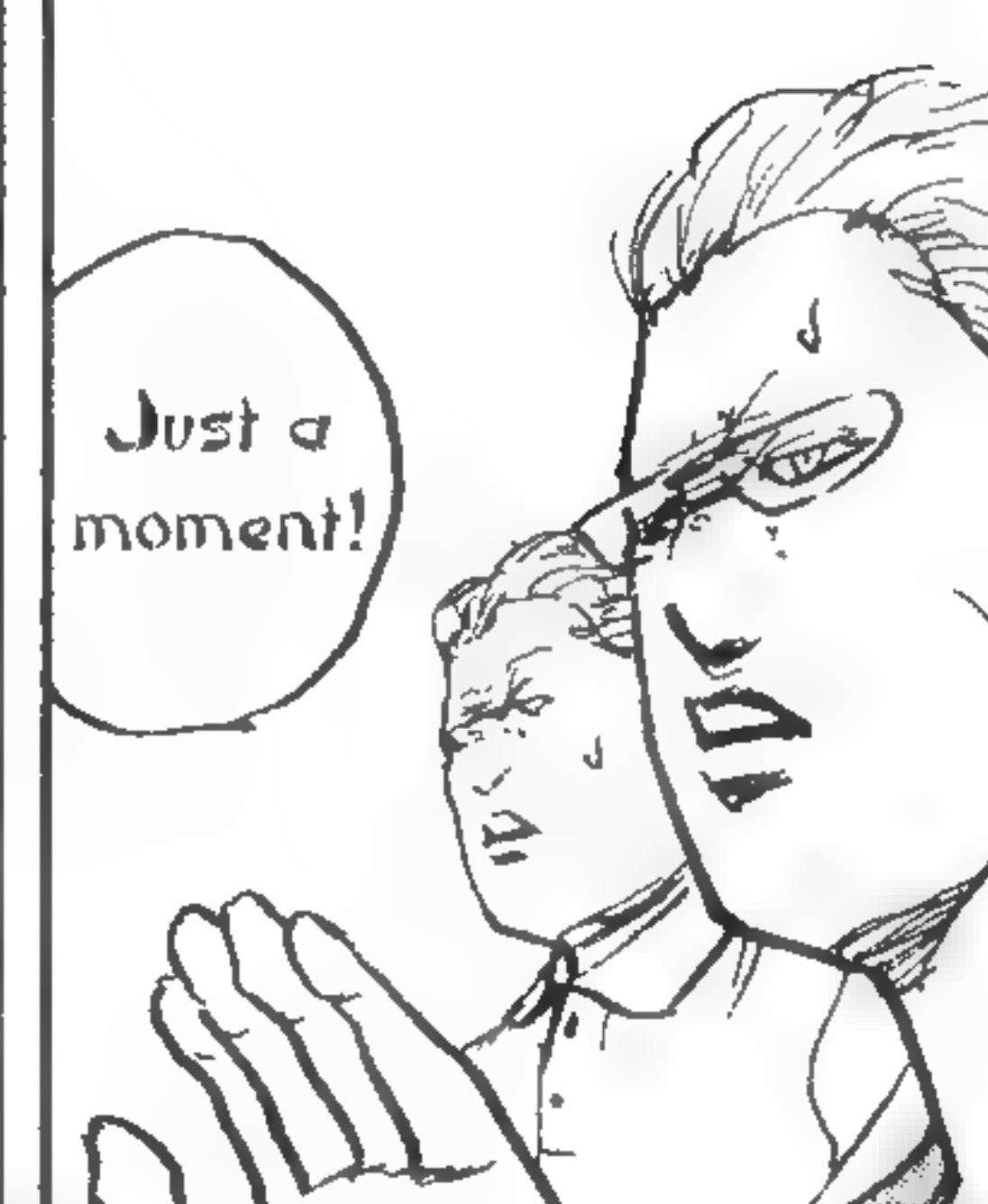
SIR...

WELL SAID.



THE TRUTH IS,
THE MAWASHI
IS NOT OF
JAPANESE
ORIGIN.

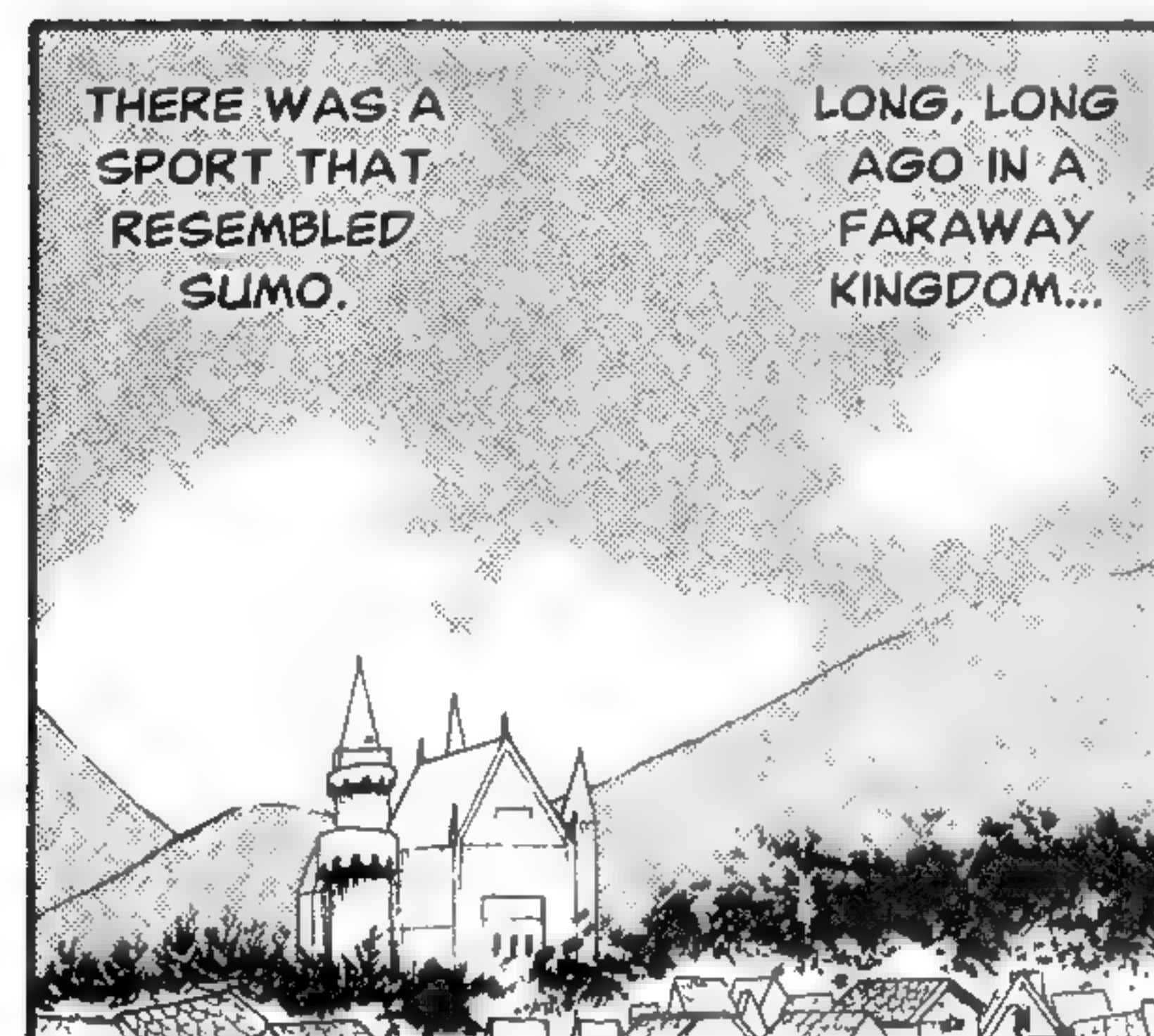
Doesn't
this story
take place
in Japan?



Just a
moment!



LONG
AGO, IN A
FARAWAY
KINGDOM...



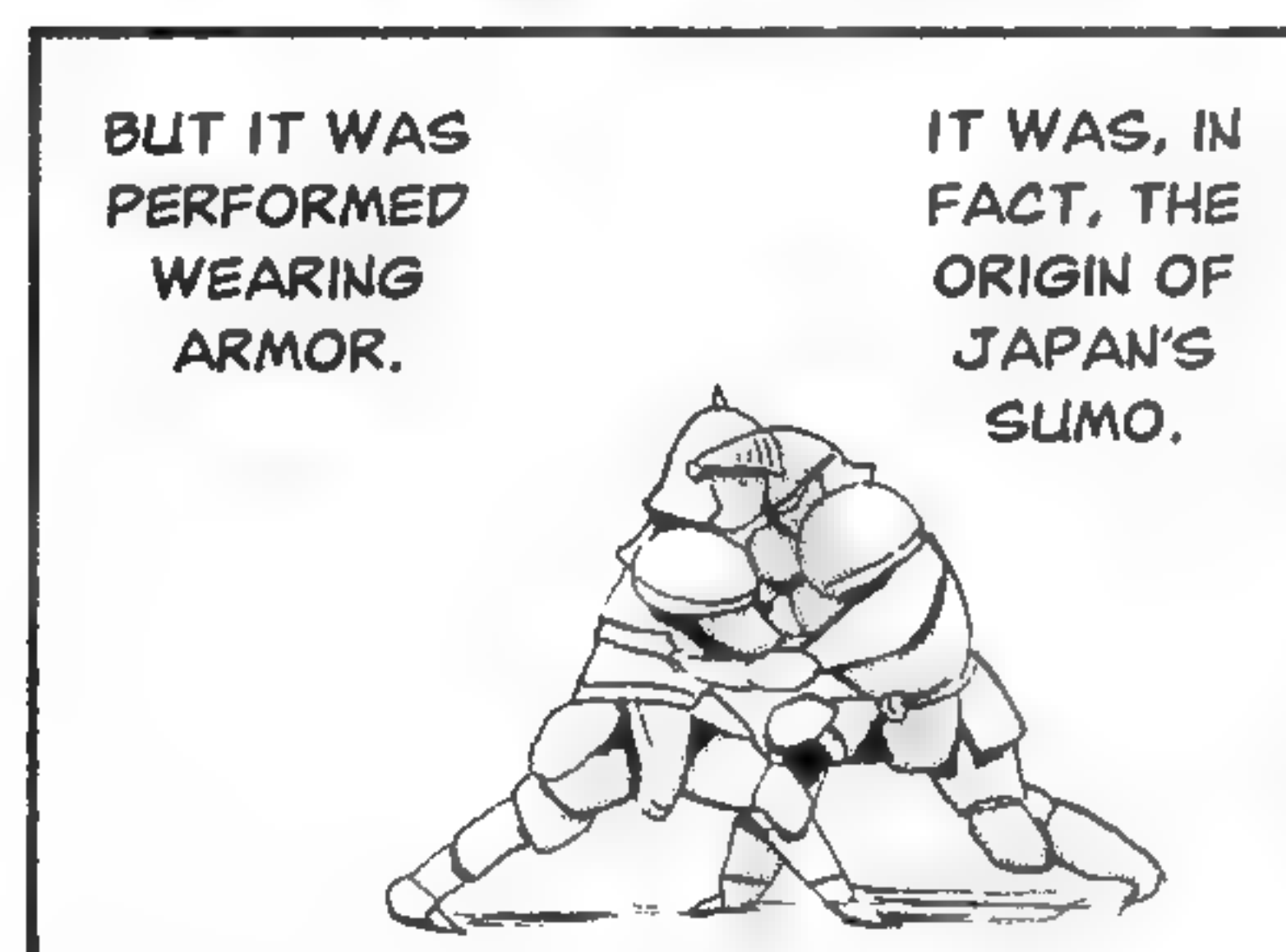
THERE WAS A
SPORT THAT
RESEMBLED
SUMO.

LONG, LONG
AGO IN A
FARAWAY
KINGDOM...



I'M LYING,
OF COURSE!
DON'T YOU
GO GETTING
FOOLED, TOO!
JUST SIT
THERE AND
SHUT UP!

WHAT?!
IT'S NOT
JAPANESE?



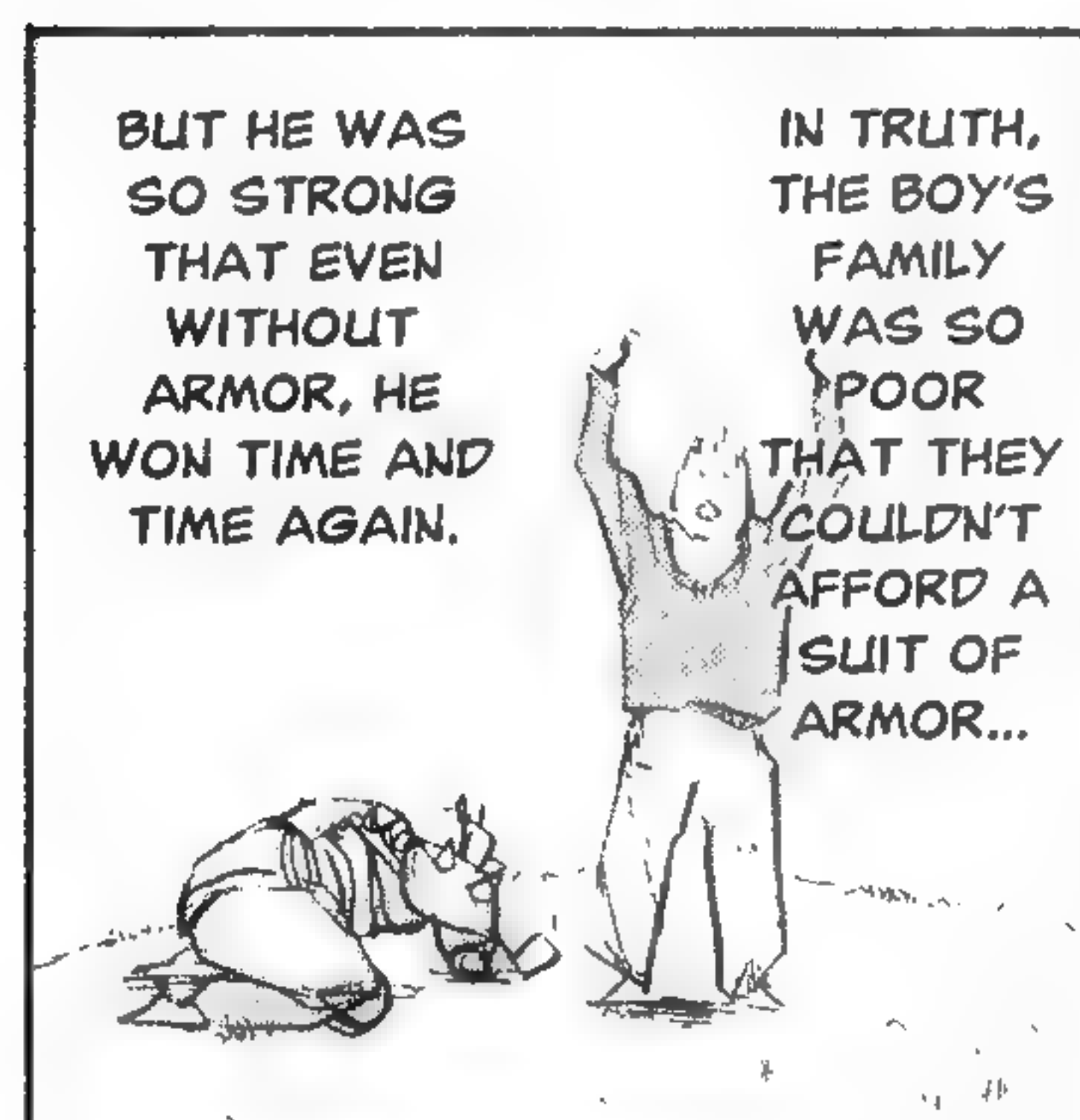
BUT IT WAS
PERFORMED
WEARING
ARMOR.

IT WAS, IN
FACT, THE
ORIGIN OF
JAPAN'S
SUMO.



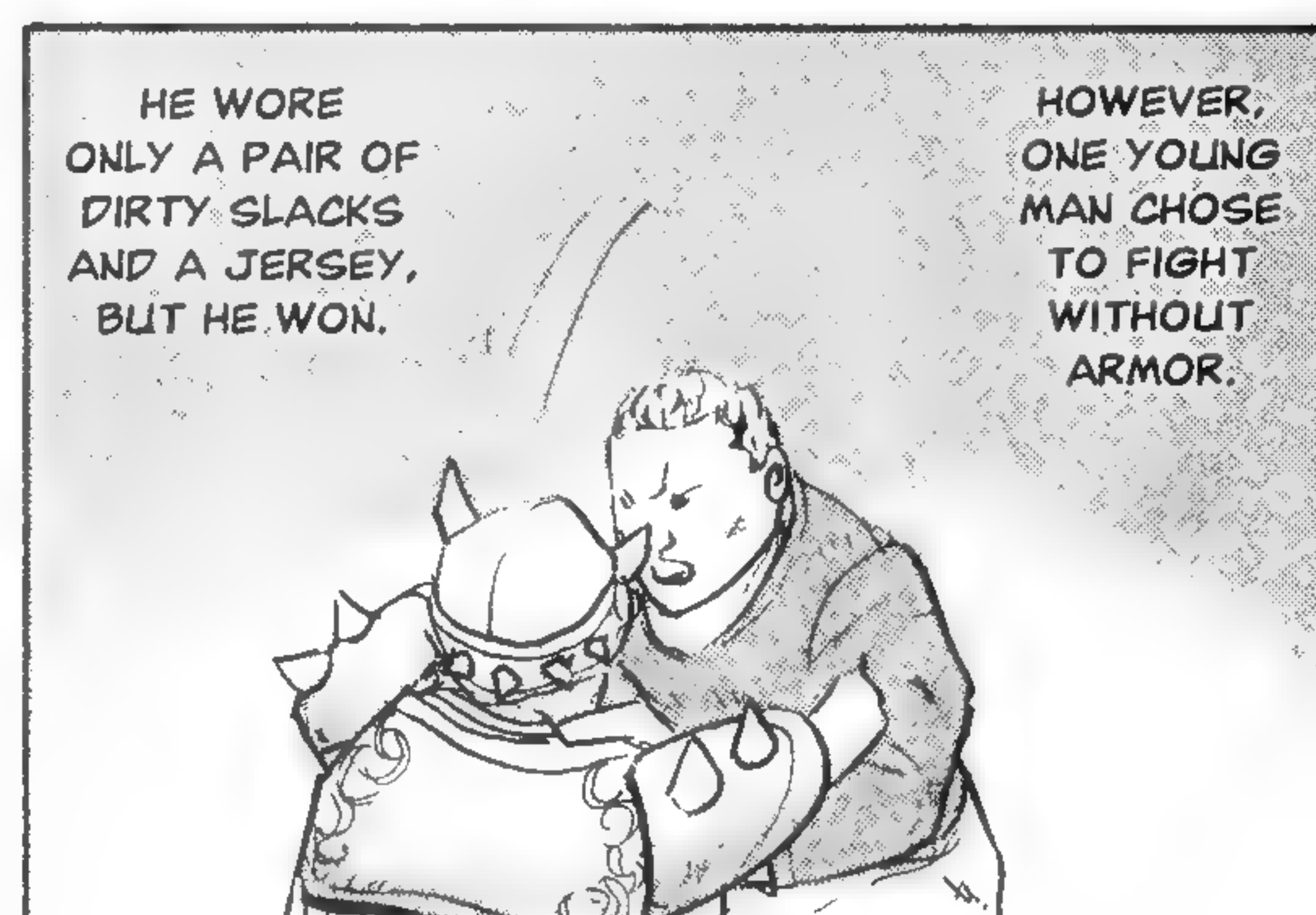
THE RULES
WERE ALSO
ABOUT THE
SAME AS
SUMO...

TWO
COMBATANTS
WOULD ENTER
A SQUARE RING
AND ATTEMPT
TO PUSH EACH
OTHER-OUT.



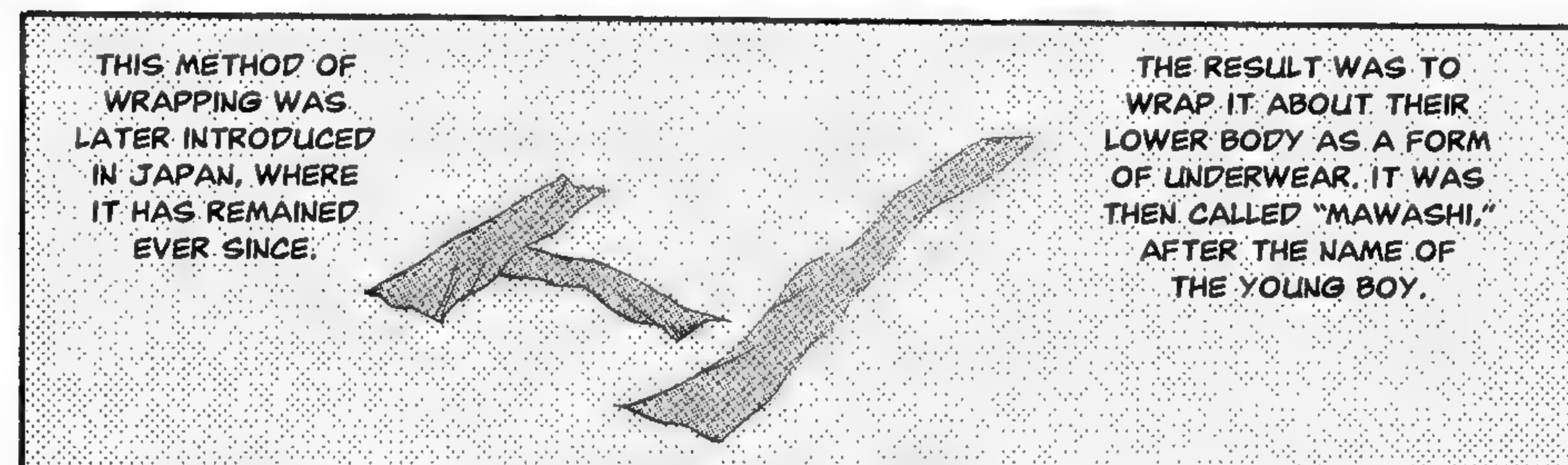
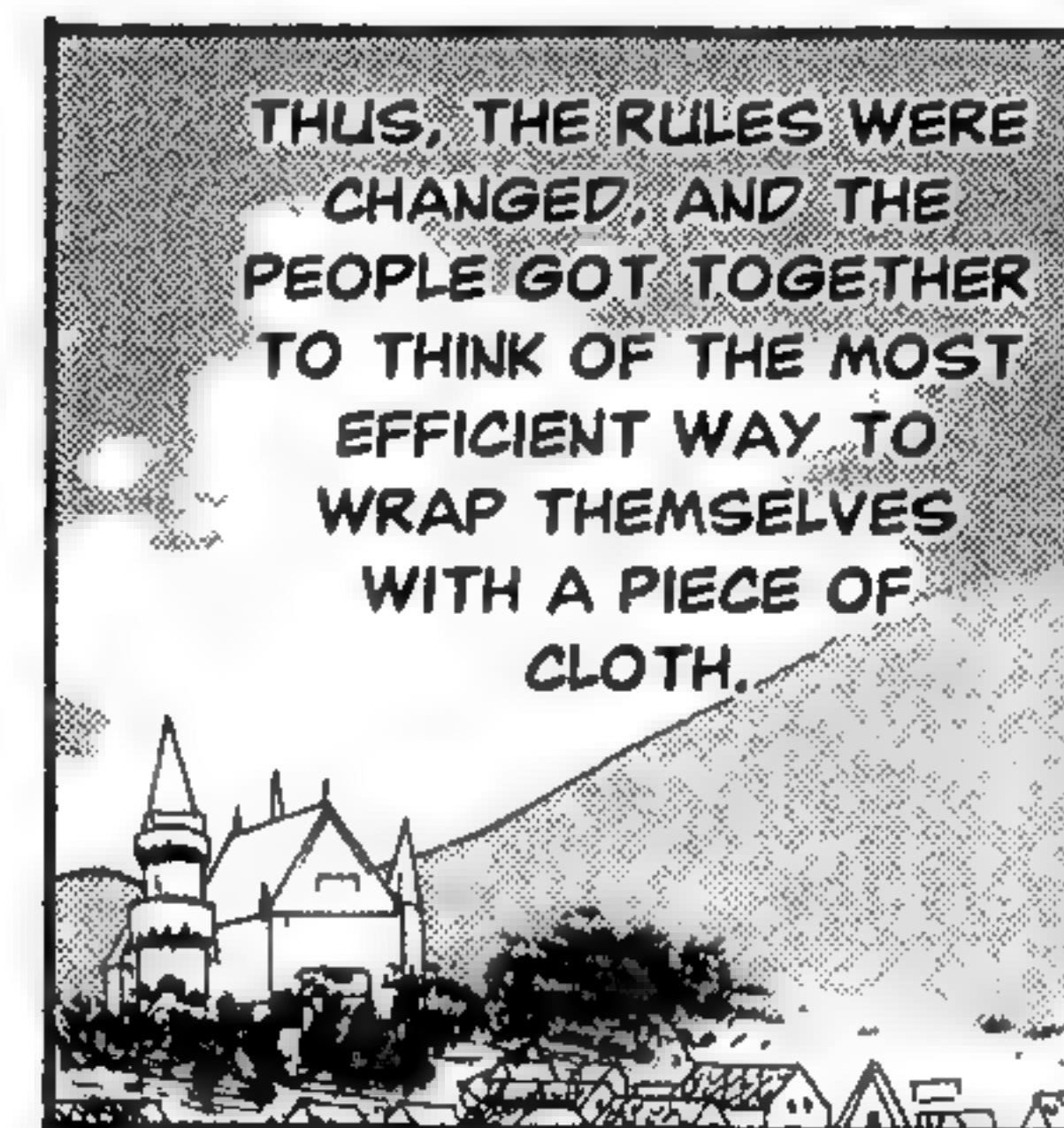
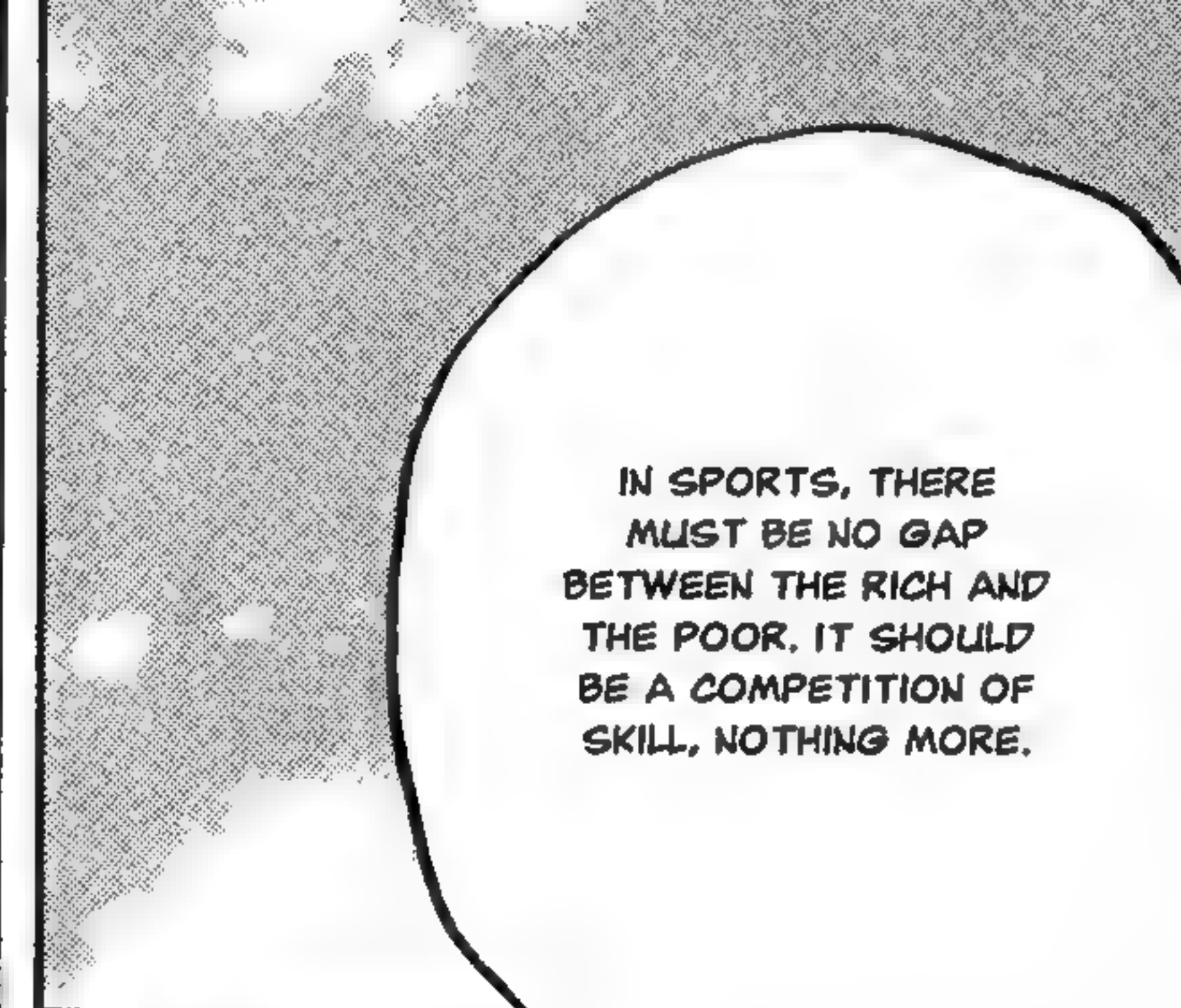
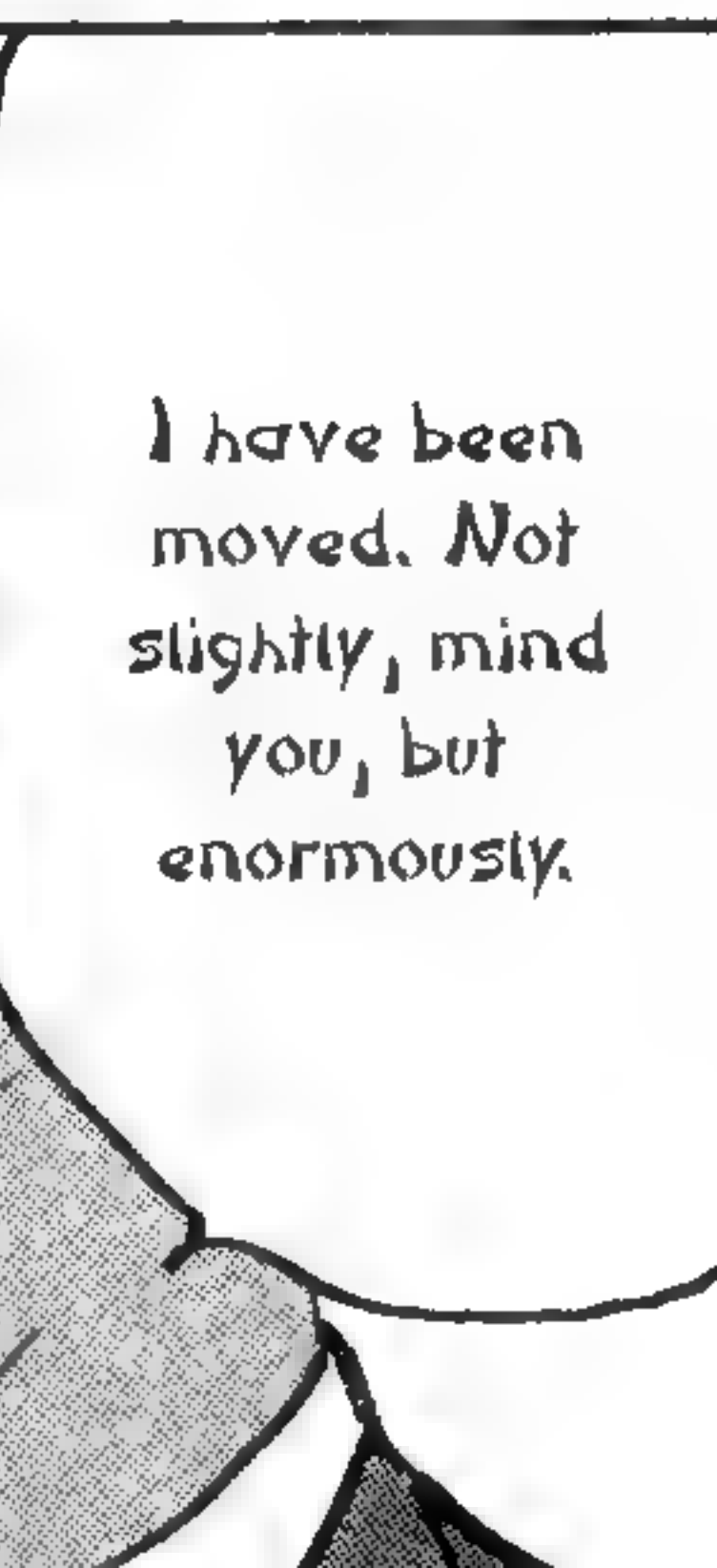
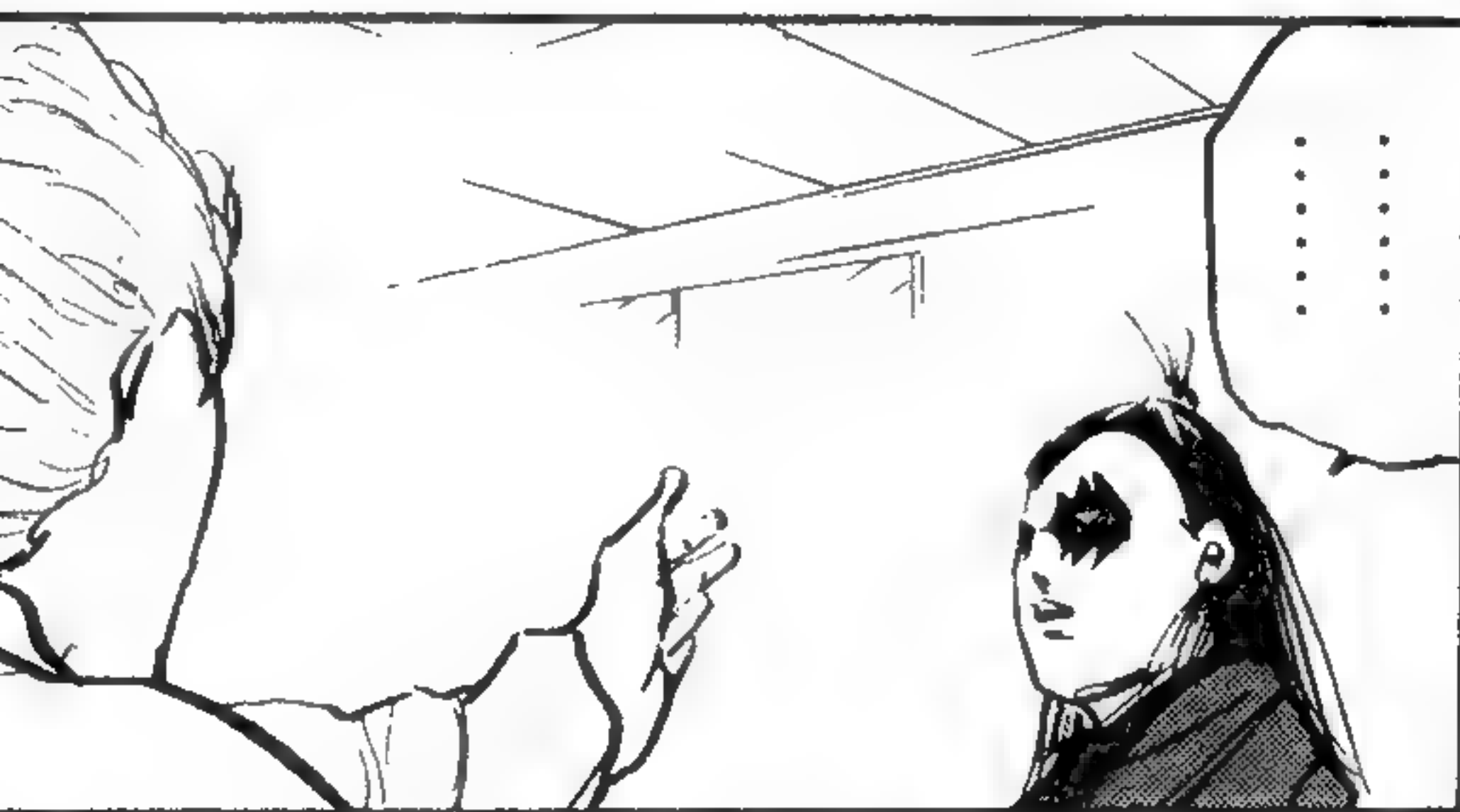
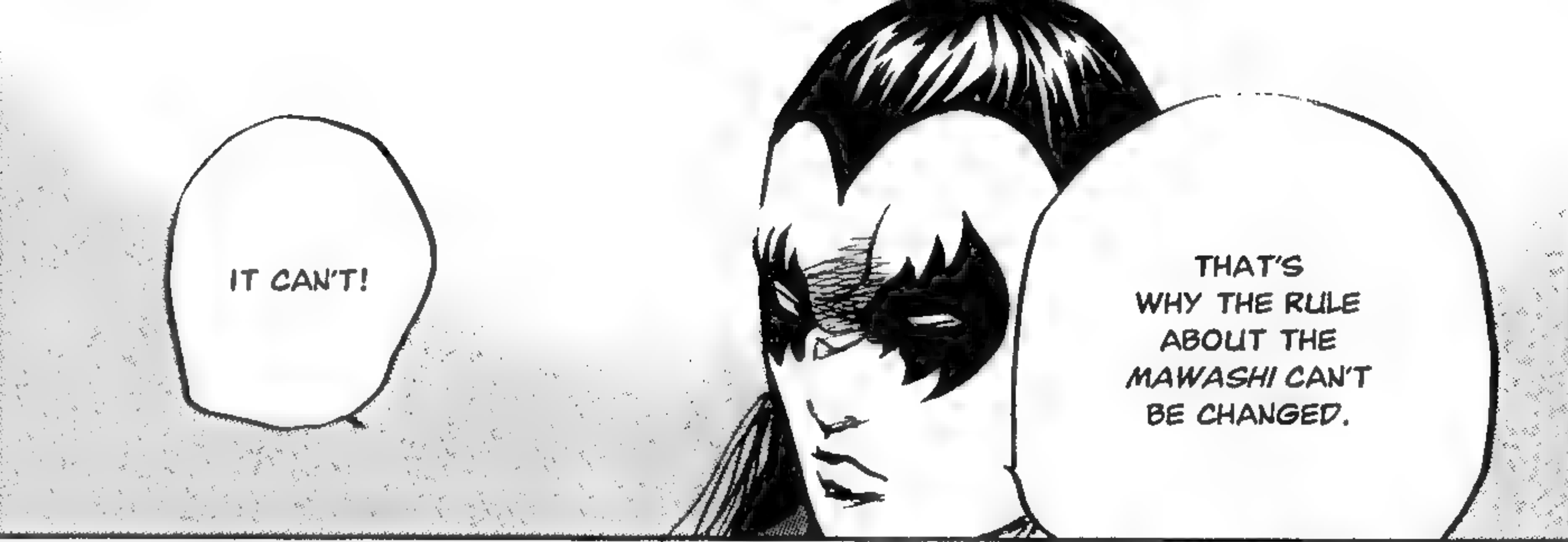
BUT HE WAS
SO STRONG
THAT EVEN
WITHOUT
ARMOR, HE
WON TIME AND
TIME AGAIN.

IN TRUTH,
THE BOY'S
FAMILY
WAS SO
POOR
THAT THEY
COULDN'T
AFFORD A
SUIT OF
ARMOR...

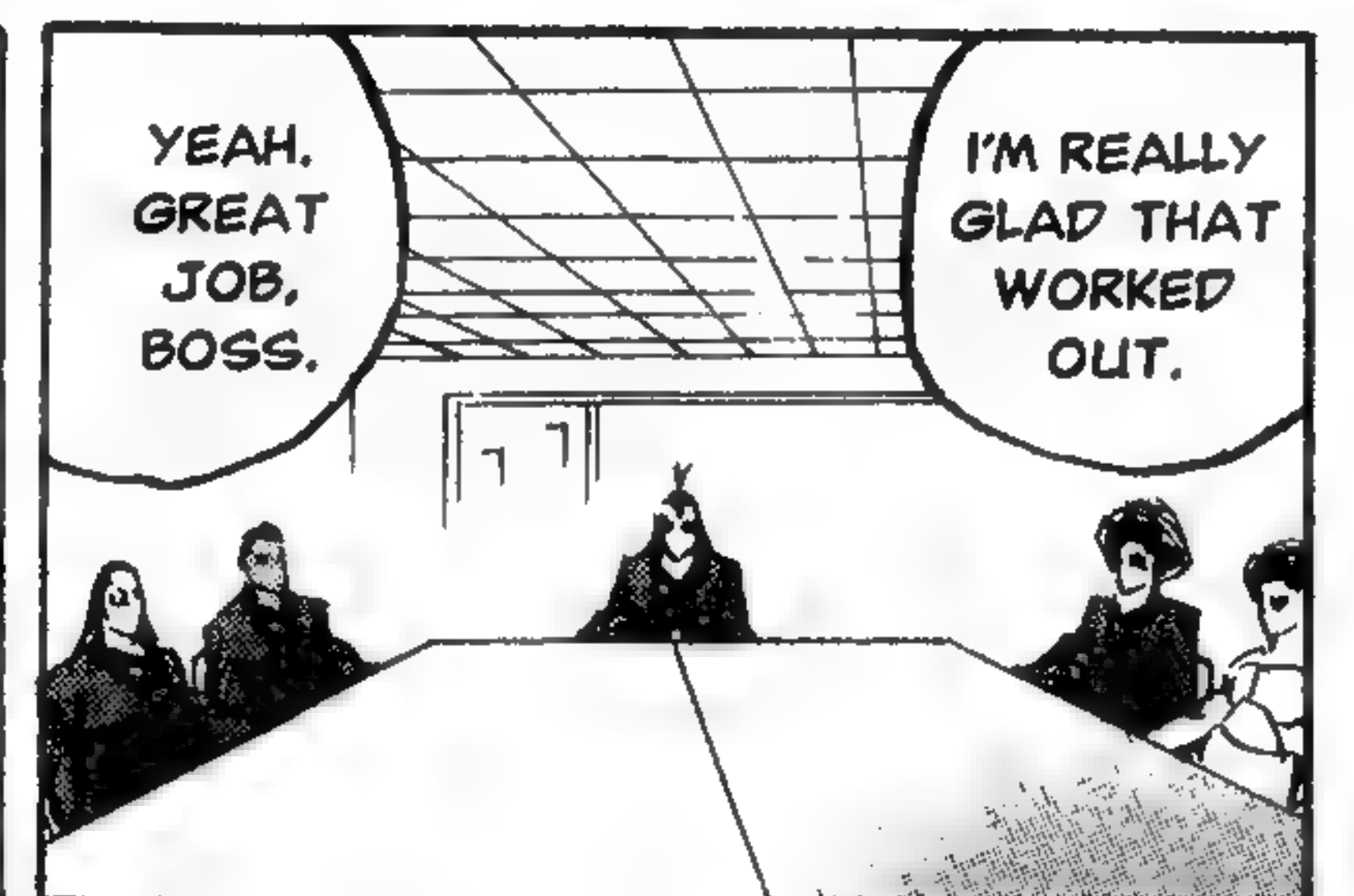
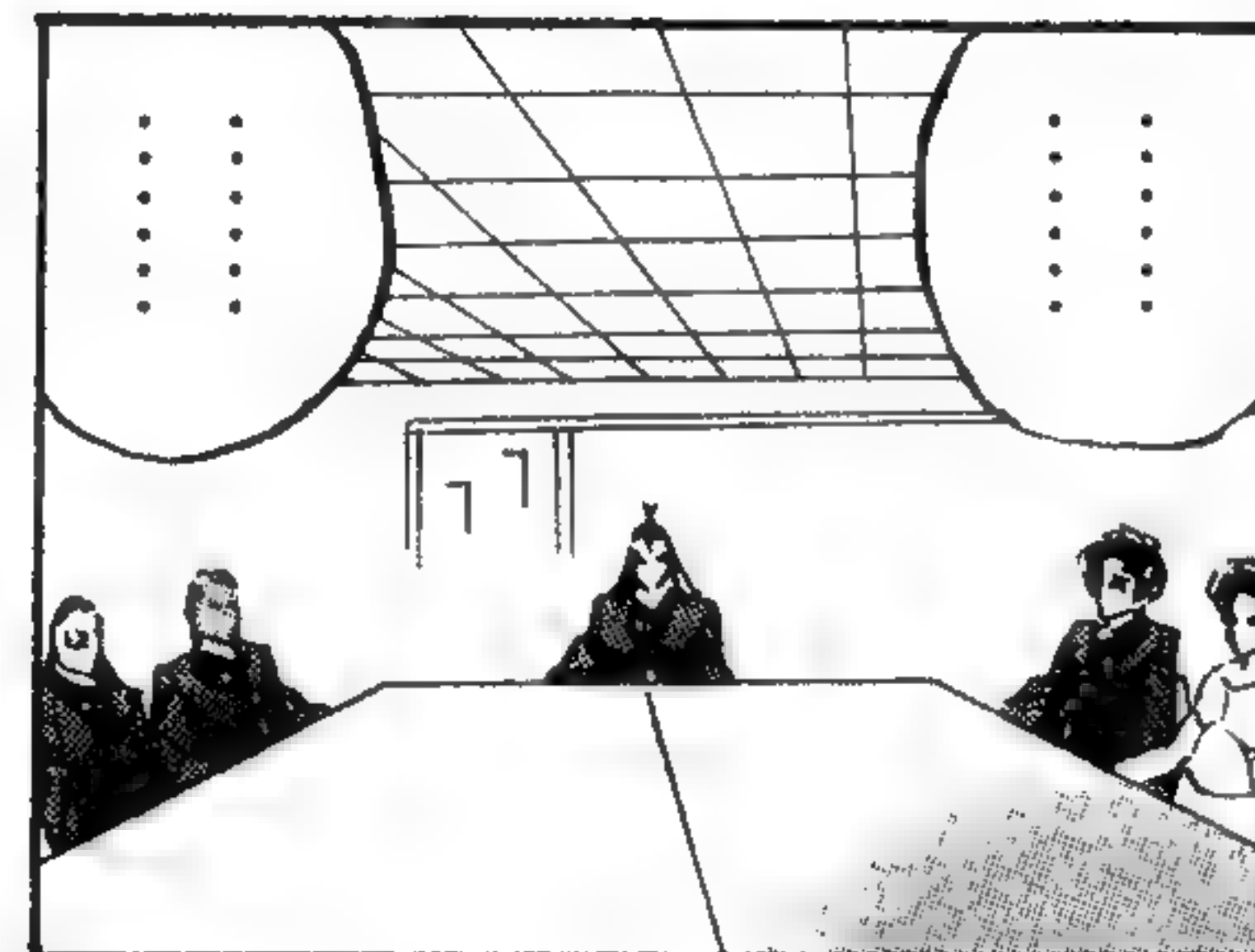
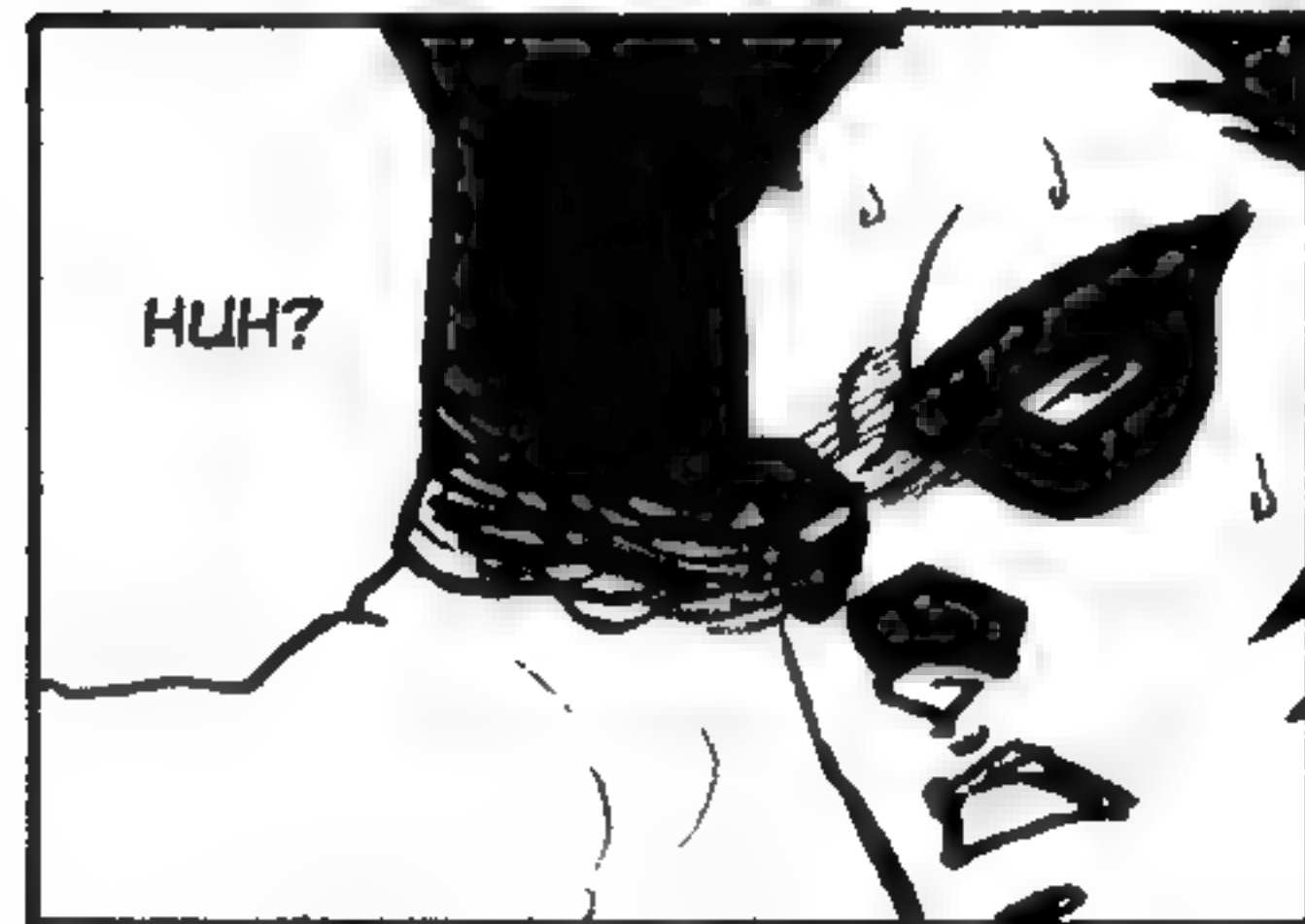
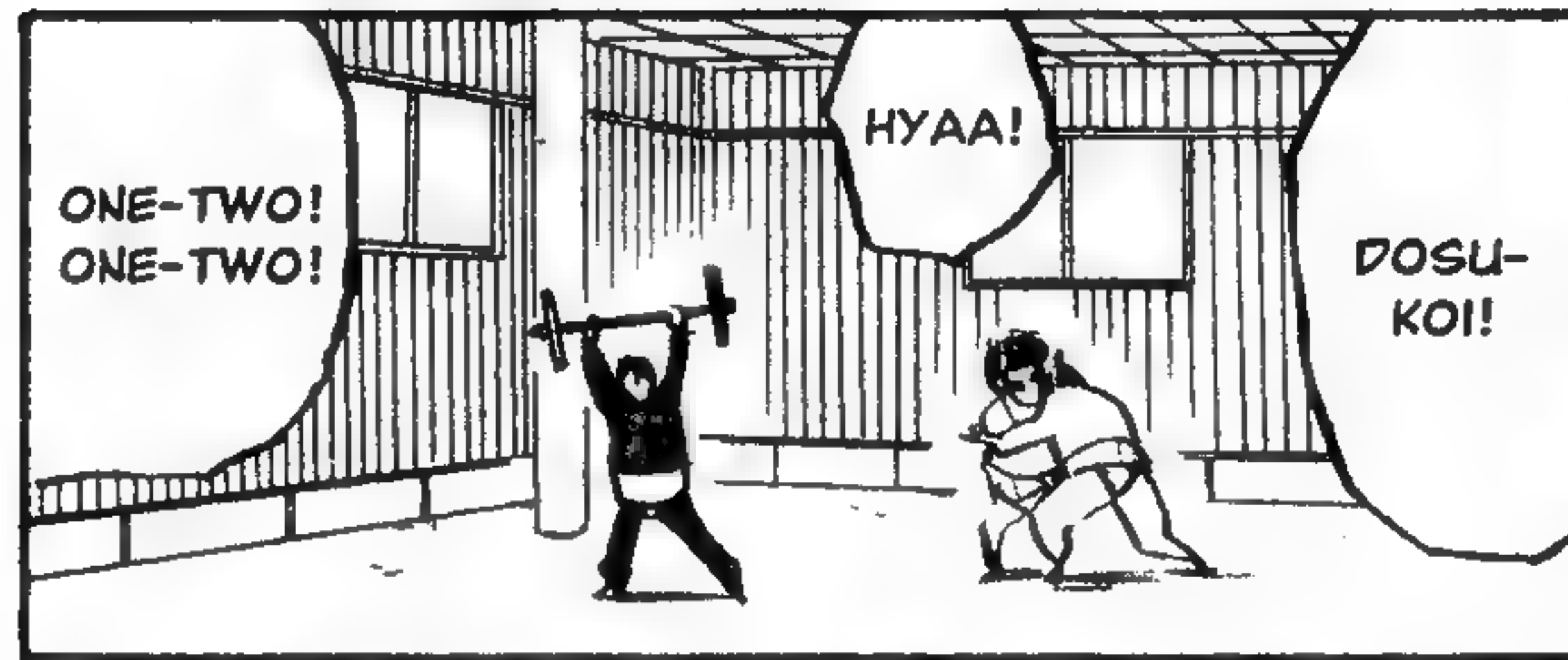


HE WORE
ONLY A PAIR OF
DIRTY SLACKS
AND A JERSEY,
BUT HE WON.

HOWEVER,
ONE YOUNG
MAN CHOSE
TO FIGHT
WITHOUT
ARMOR.



CHAPTER 251: IT'S NOT TRUE

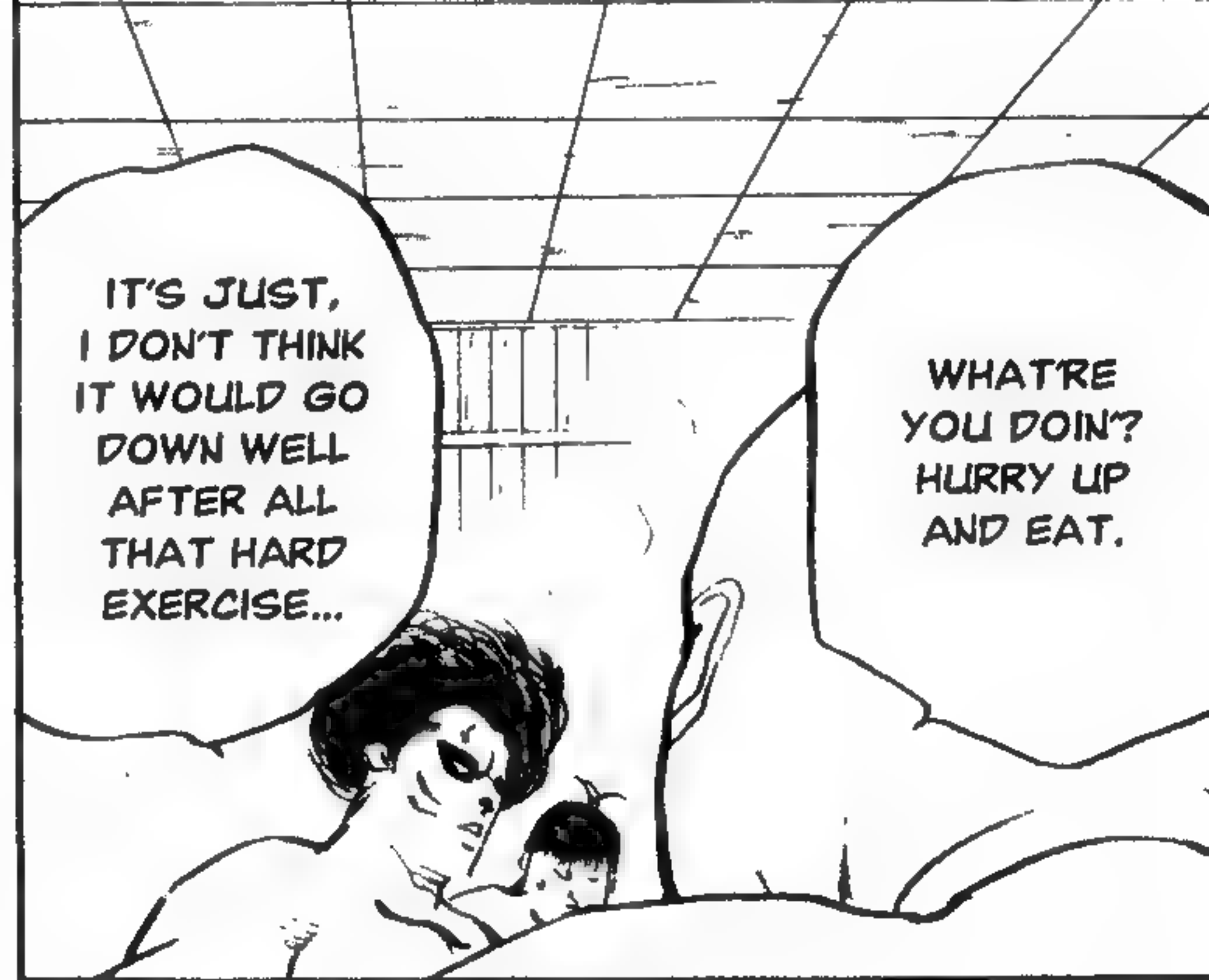


SO "MAWASHI" IS A NAME, IS IT?



WE'RE SUMO
WRESTLERS!
WE'VE GOTTA
EAT!

IDIOT!

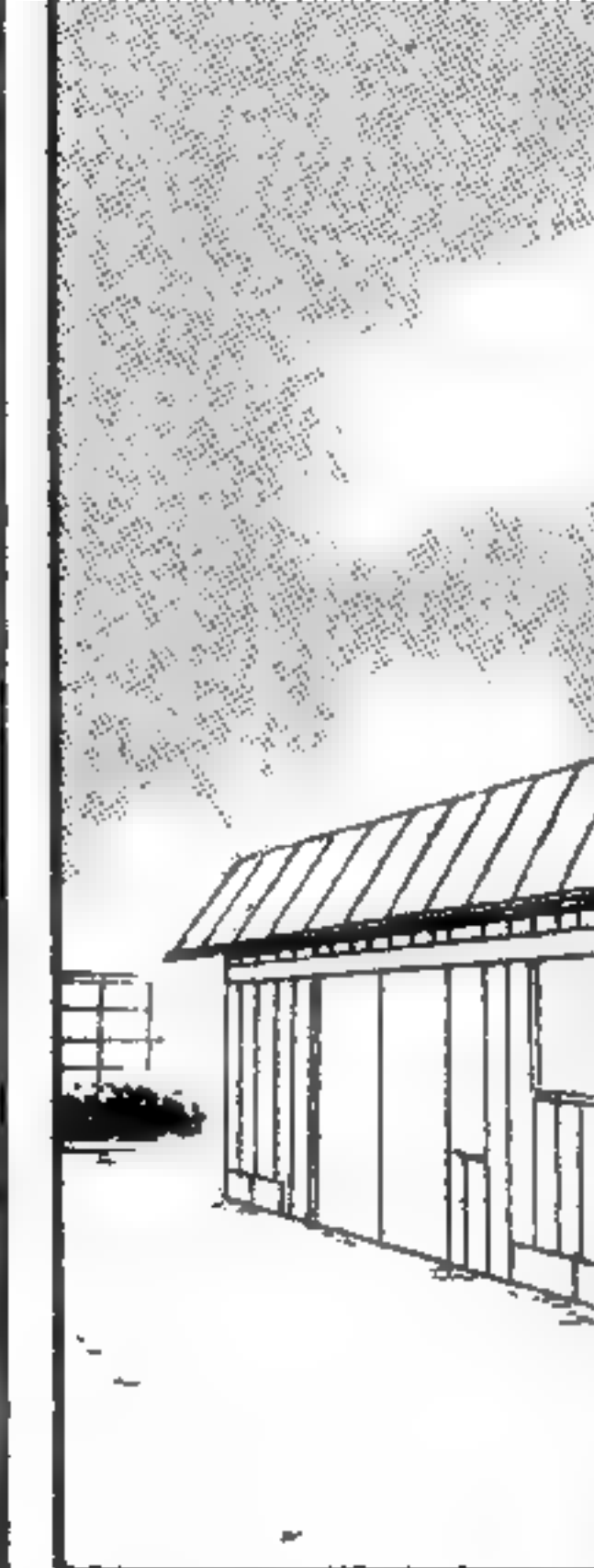


IT'S JUST,
I DON'T THINK
IT WOULD GO
DOWN WELL
AFTER ALL
THAT HARD
EXERCISE...

WHAT'RE
YOU DOIN'?
HURRY UP
AND EAT.



AAH



Y-YES,
SIR.

PUT
SOME
MORE
SPIRIT
INTO IT!



UM, VICE
CAPTAIN?

HNGH



SORRY,
SIR.

EATIN' AND
GETTING FAT IS
PART OF THE JOB!
WAHAHA!



BUT HERE, YOU
ARE HIS SENIOR.
I THINK HE'S GOING
A LITTLE FAR IN HIS
ATTITUDE TOWARD
YOU.

PERHAPS IT CAN'T BE
HELPED THAT MASK
HAS BECOME RATHER
ARROGANT SINCE
DEFEATING THE SKILLED
COMBATANTS OF OUR
RIVAL SCHOOL...



HMPH. WHILE
WE'RE ON THE
SUBJECT,
LET ME
TELL YOU
SOMETHING...

I'M SORRY.
IT WILL
BE JUST
A LITTLE
LONGER.

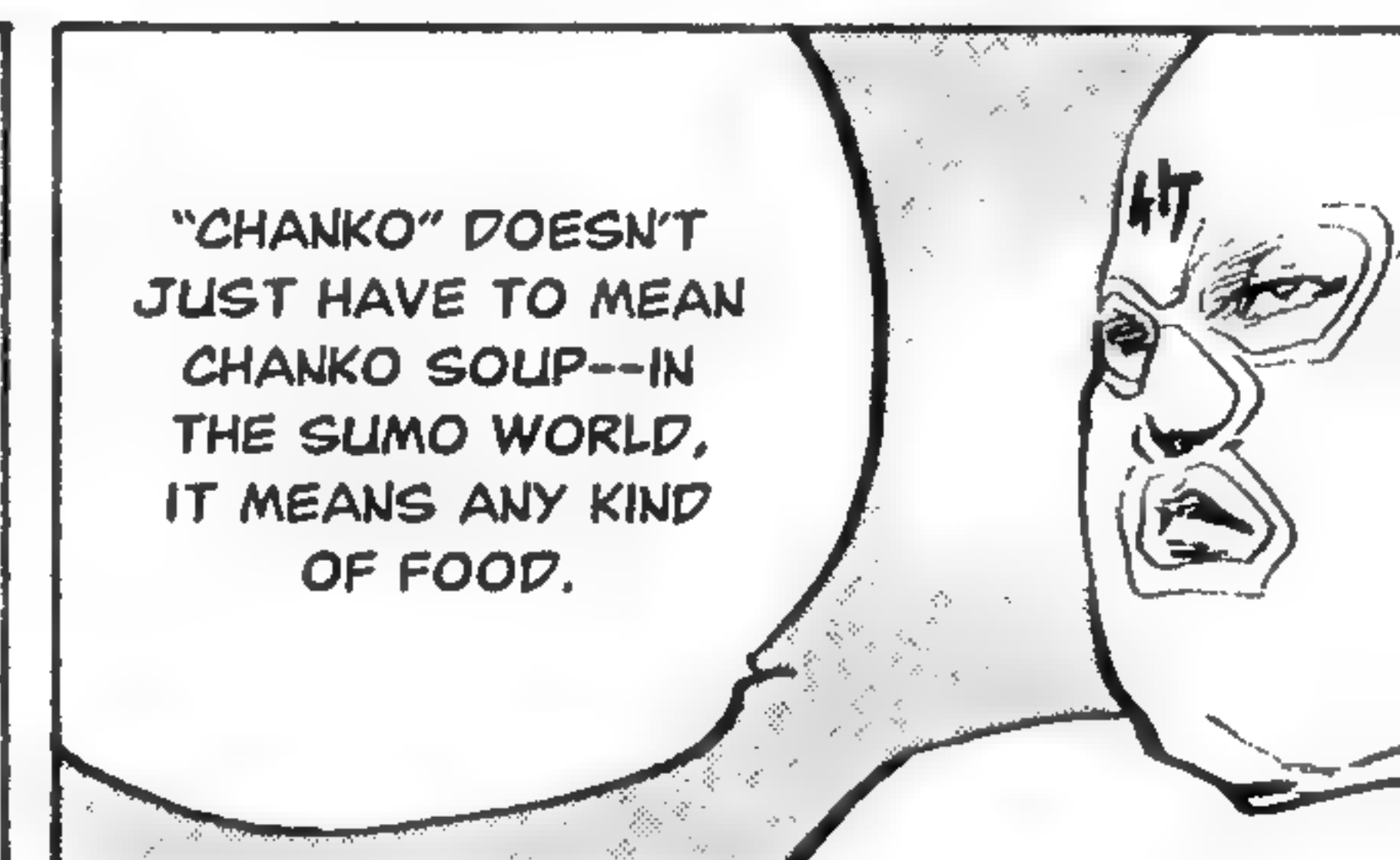


ISN'T THAT
CHANKO READY
YET? I'M
STARVED.



UH, YES,
SIR.

WELL?
LEARNED
SOMETHING
NEW, DIDN'T
YOU?



"CHANKO" DOESN'T
JUST HAVE TO MEAN
CHANKO SOUP--IN
THE SUMO WORLD,
IT MEANS ANY KIND
OF FOOD.



I GUESS IT MAKES ME
A LITTLE SAD, BUT IN
THE SUMO WORLD, THE
ONLY THING THAT MAKES
JUNIORS AND SENIORS IS
POWER. IT'S GOT NOTHING
TO DO WITH WHO'S BEEN
AROUND LONGER.

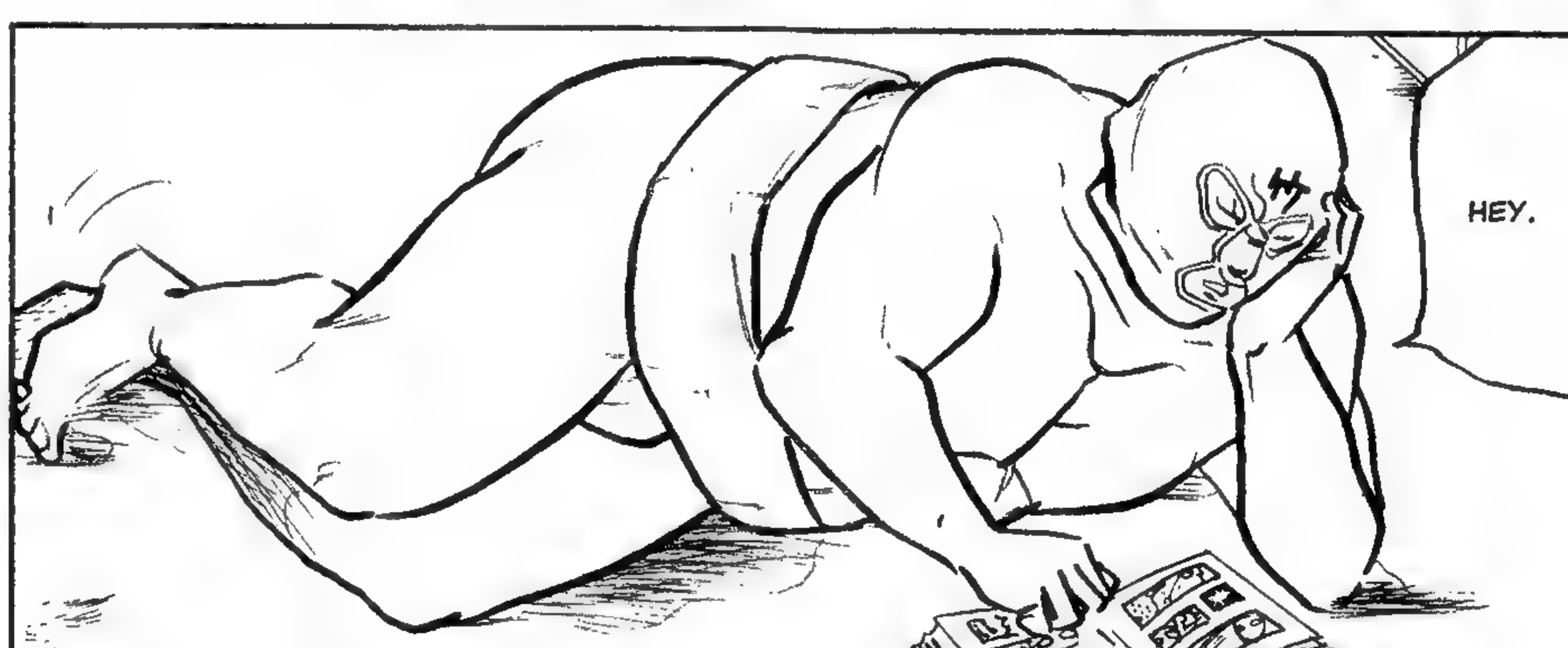
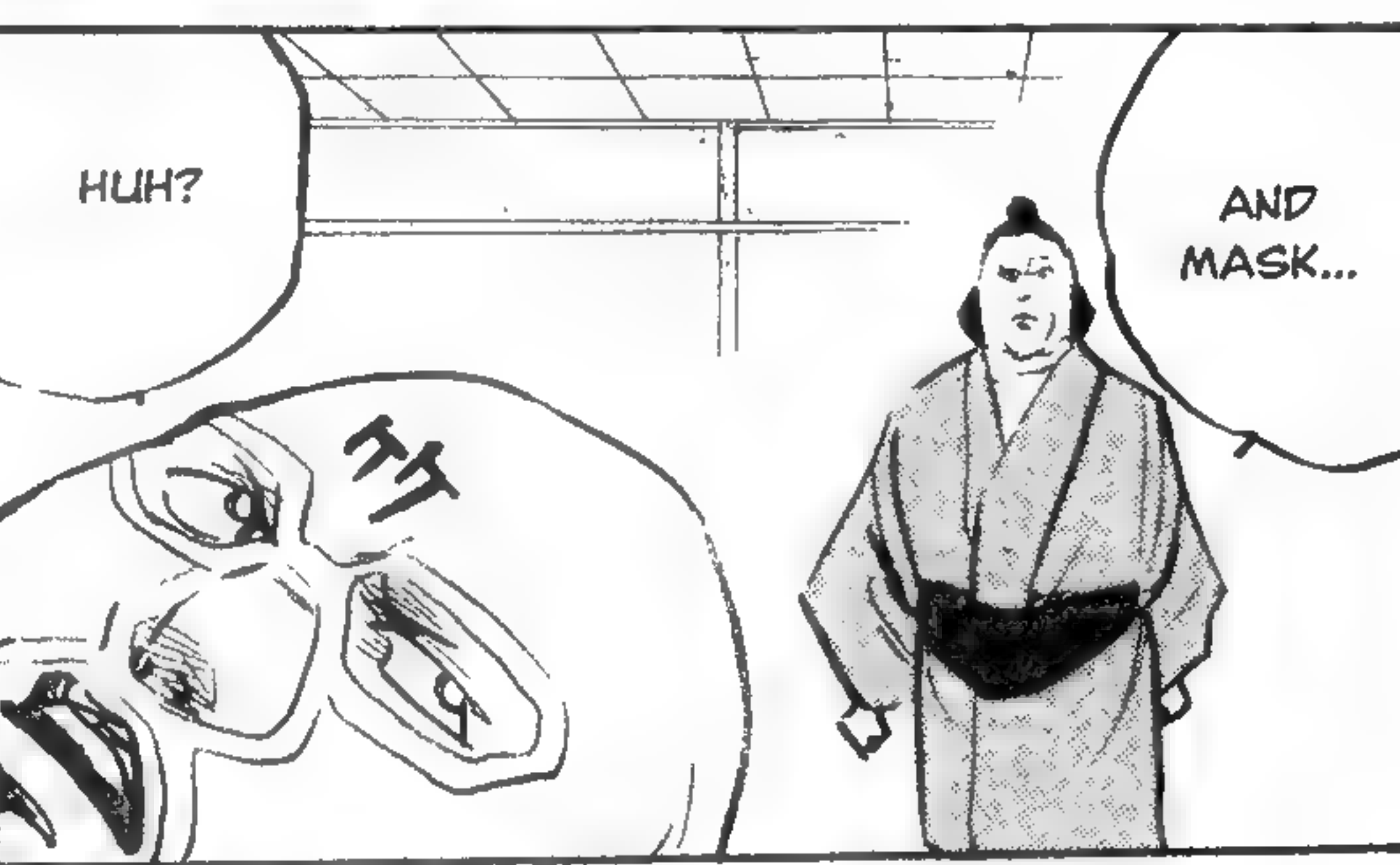
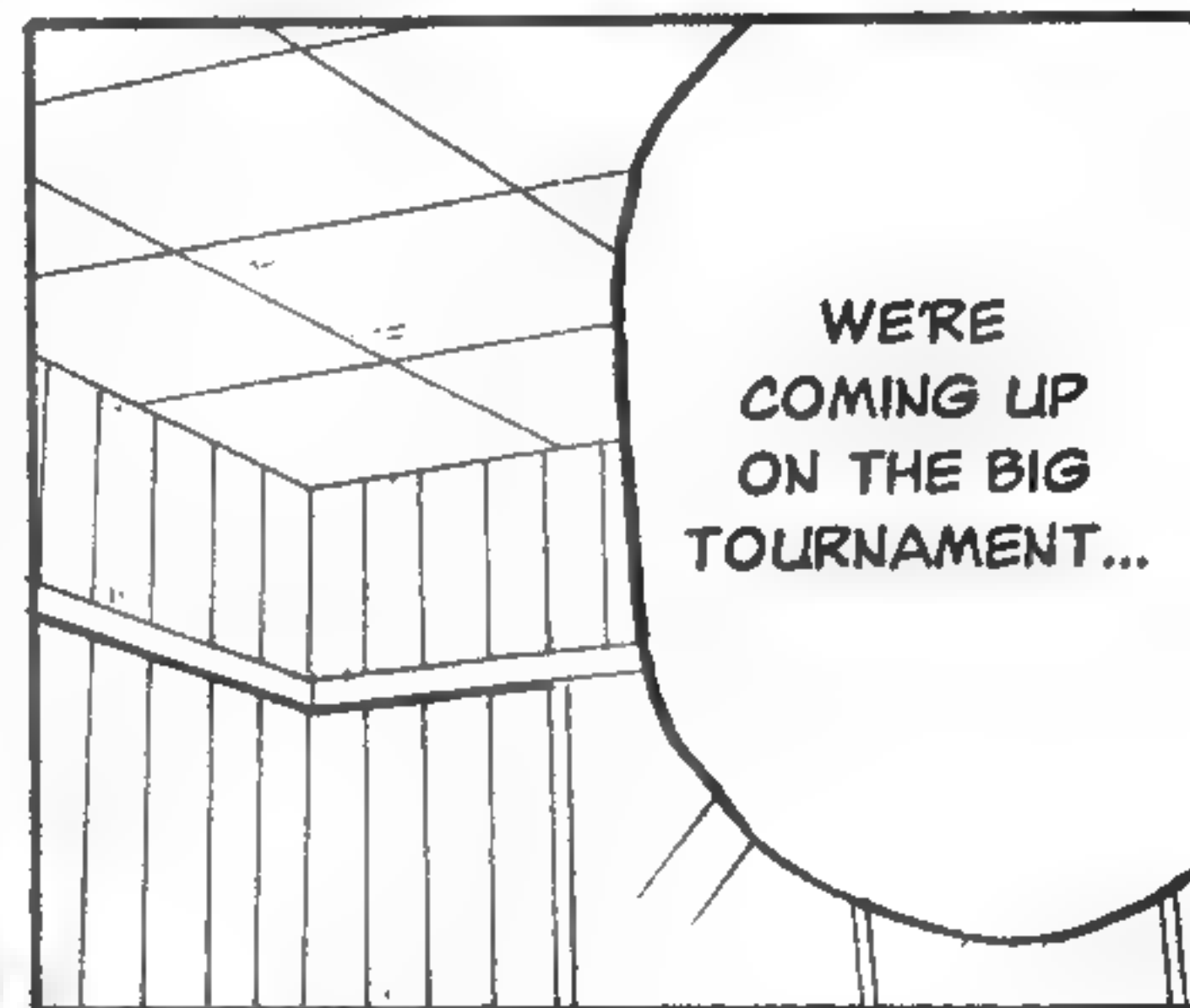
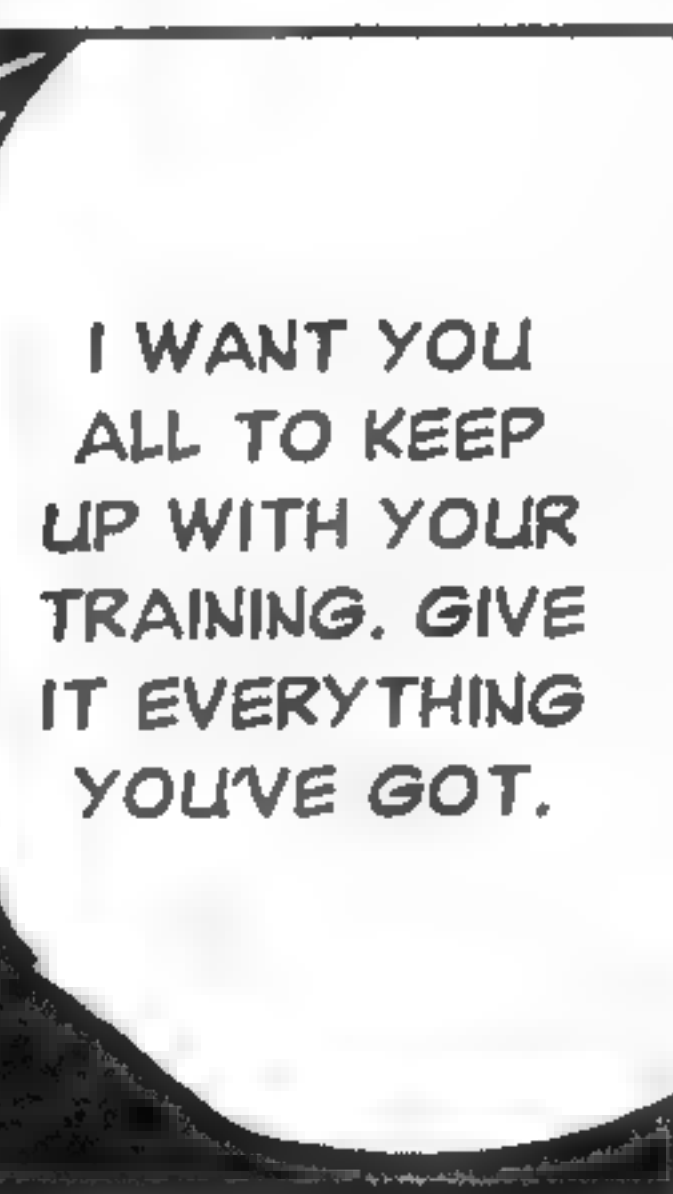
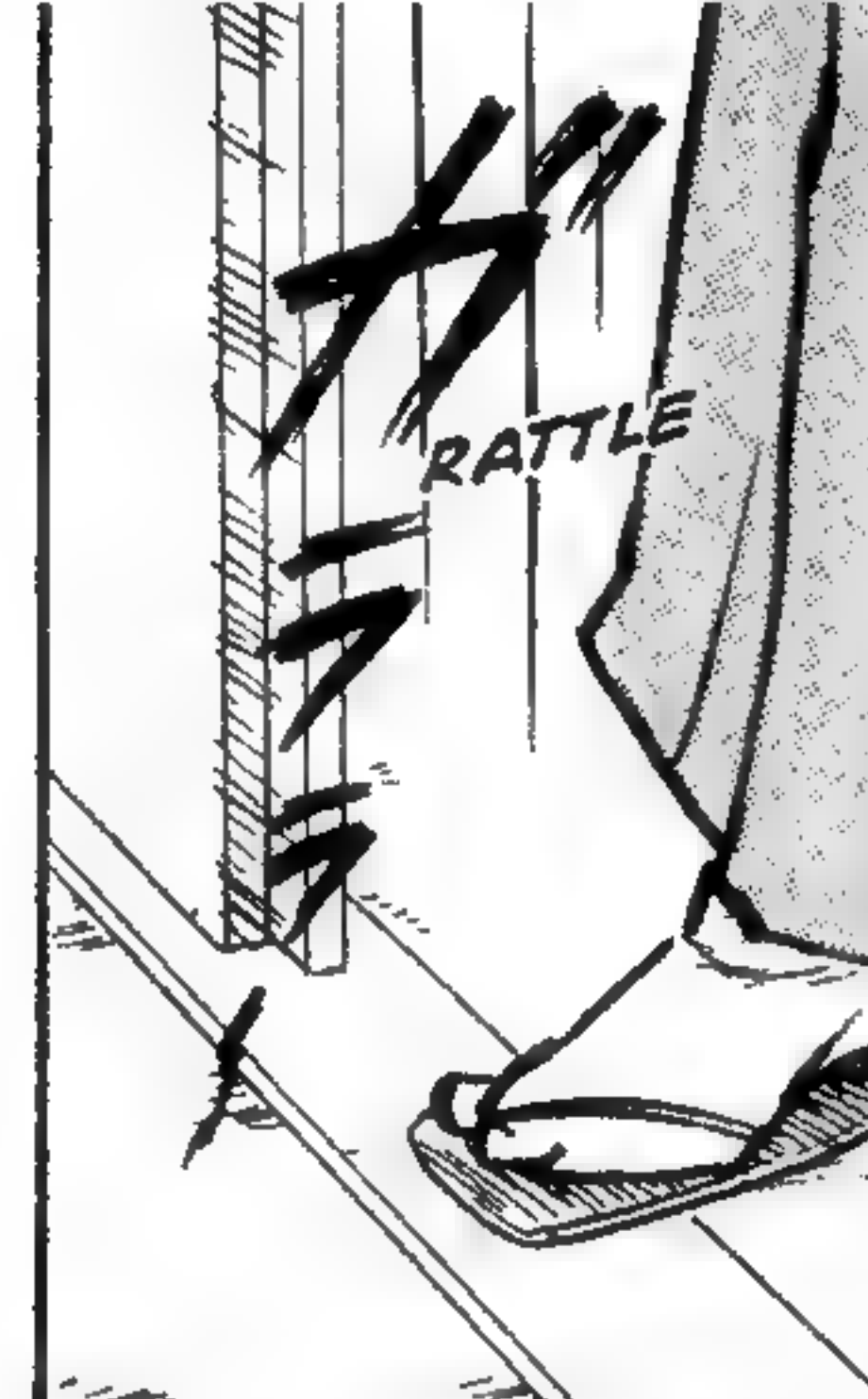


NO, IT'S
FINE.

PERHAPS
A GOOD
TALKING-TO
IS IN ORDER.



SORRY TO
KEEP YOU
WAITING.
HERE'S THE
CHANKO.



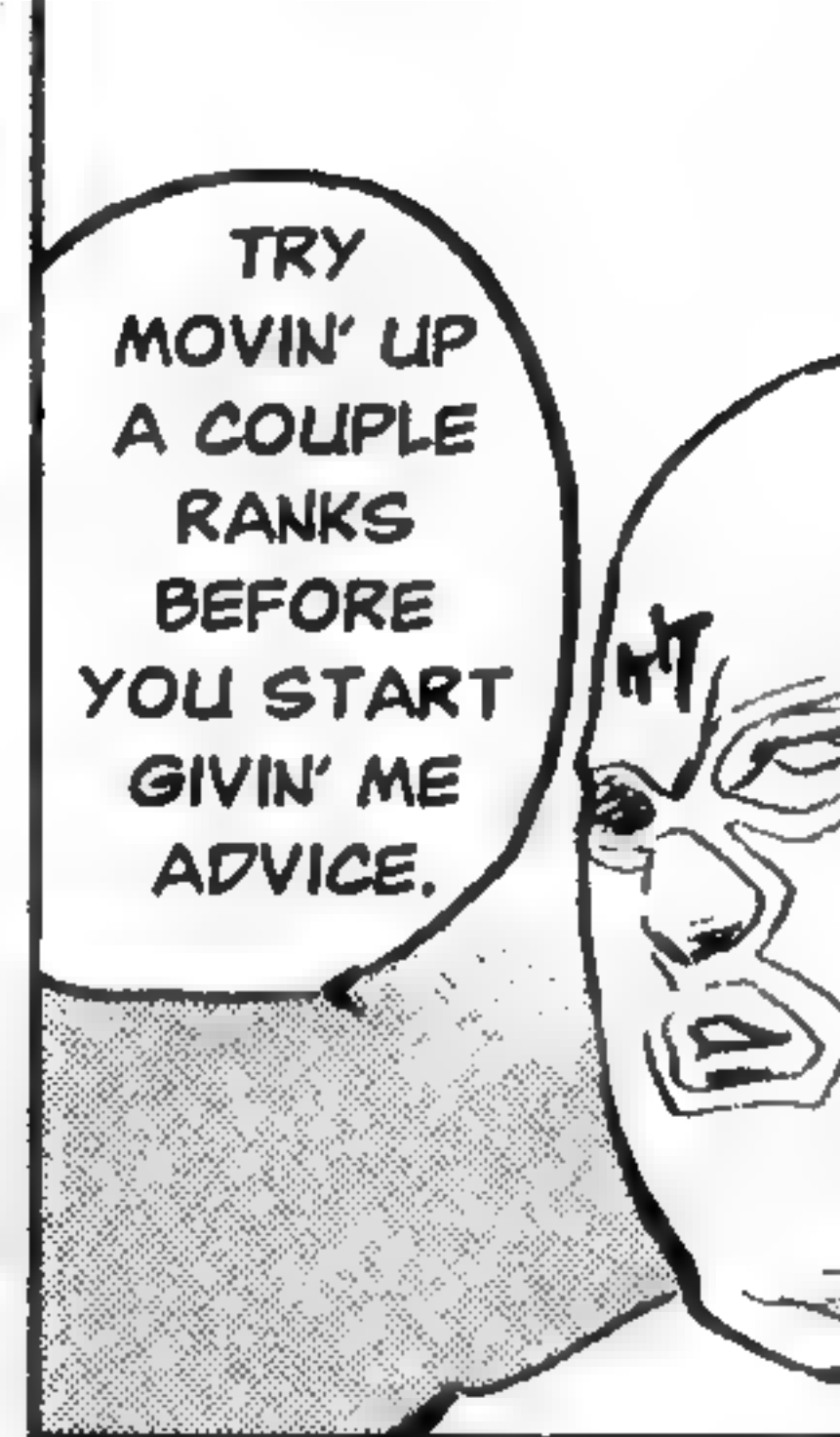


YOU KNOW WHAT
STOPS SUMO
FROM GETTING
POPULAR? IT'S
PEOPLE TALKING
OLD-SCHOOL CRAP
LIKE THAT.

LOOK, JUST
TAKE IT OFF.
IT'S AGAINST
TRADITION.



NGH!



TRY
MOVIN' UP
A COUPLE
RANKS
BEFORE
YOU START
GIVIN' ME
ADVICE.



WHO
DO YOU
THINK
YOU'RE
TALKIN'
TO?

MASK-SAN, I
DON'T CARE IF
YOU ARE THE
VICE CAPTAIN,
THAT SORT OF
ATTITUDE ISN'T
CALLED FOR.



THE SAME GOES
FOR THIS MAWASHI.
WHY DO WE HAVE
TO WEAR THIS THING
ANYWAY? IT'S JUST
NOT COOL.



HUH?
WHAT
DO YOU
MEAN?

WHEN IT COMES
TIME FOR THE
TOURNAMENT,
I WANT YOU
TO TAKE THAT
MASK OFF.



HUH?

MASK,
THERE'S
SOMETHING
I WANT TO
SAY TO
YOU.

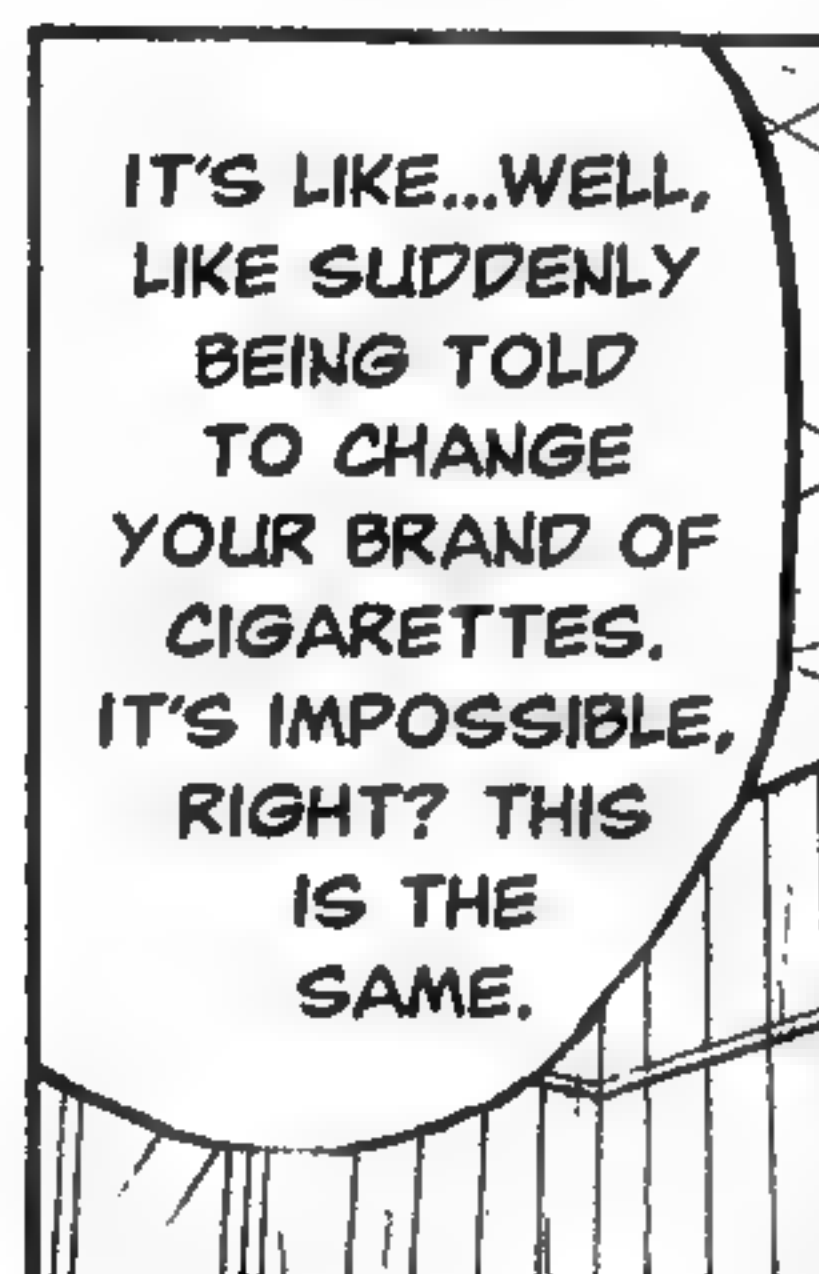


DO YOU EVEN
KNOW WHAT
DEEP MEANING
THE MAWASHI
HOLDS?



WHAT? I'M
NOT SAYING
ANYTHING
OUT OF THE
ORDINARY
HERE.

YOU'VE
GOTTEN
PRETTY
FULL OF
YOURSELF,
HAVEN'T
YOU?



IT'S LIKE...WELL,
LIKE SUDDENLY
BEING TOLD
TO CHANGE
YOUR BRAND OF
CIGARETTES.
IT'S IMPOSSIBLE,
RIGHT? THIS
IS THE
SAME.



W
H
A
T
?

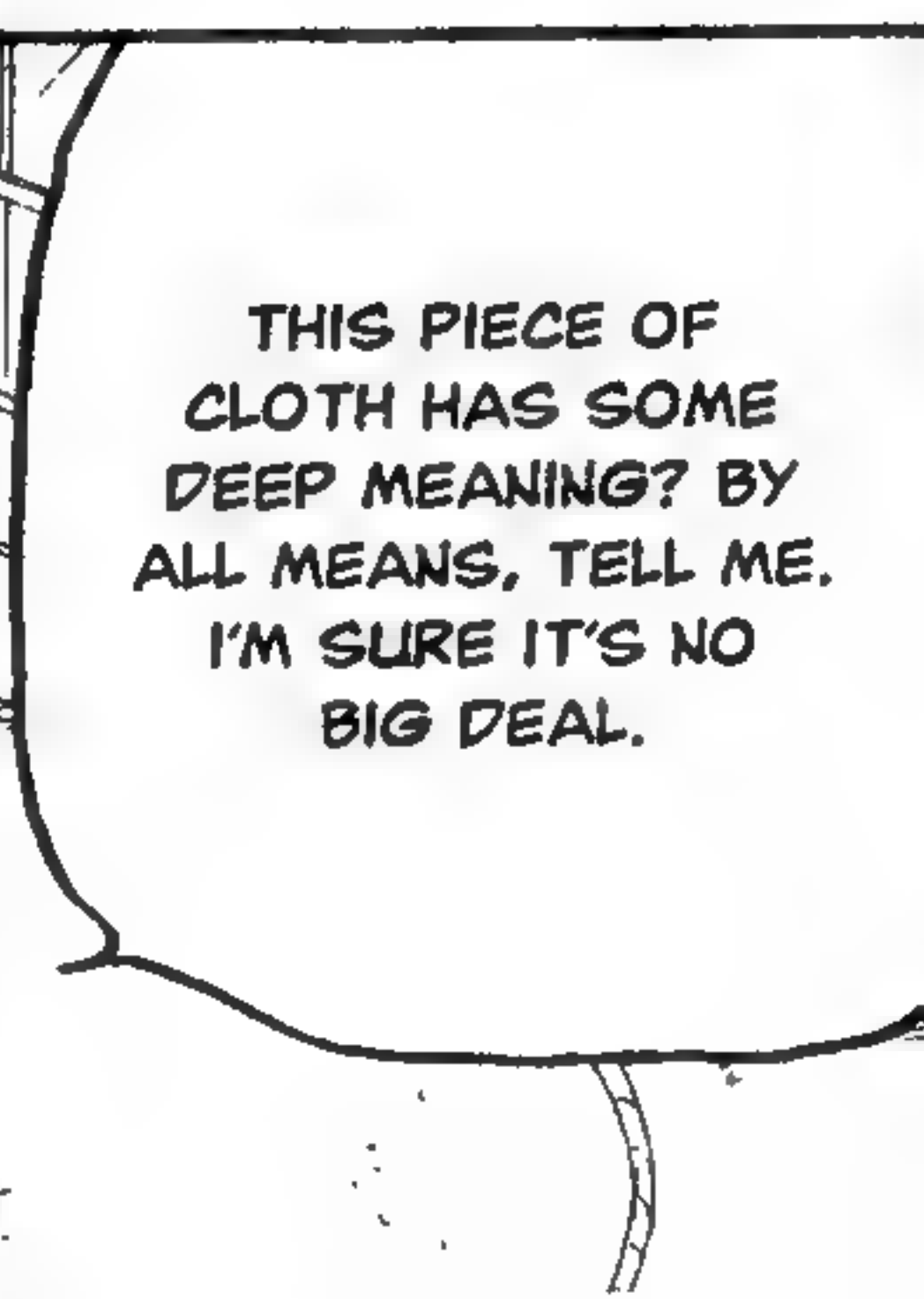
I'M NOT
TAKING IT
OFF.



WHAT DO YOU THINK I
MEAN? I OVERLOOKED
IT LAST TIME BECAUSE
IT WAS A PRACTICE
MATCH, BUT THERE'S
NO WAY YOU CAN
WEAR THAT THING IN
THE TOURNAMENT.



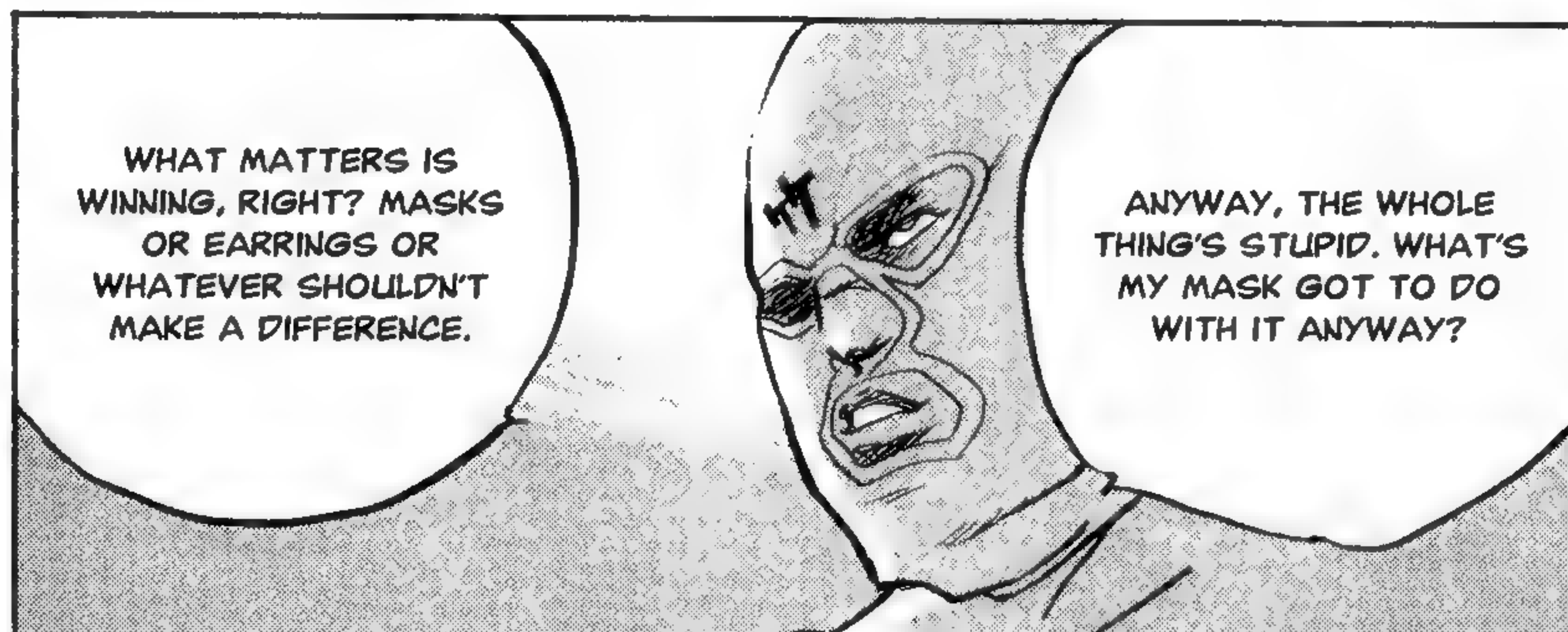
FINE. I'LL
TELL YOU.



THIS PIECE OF
CLOTH HAS SOME
DEEP MEANING? BY
ALL MEANS, TELL ME.
I'M SURE IT'S NO
BIG DEAL.



HUH?!



WHAT MATTERS IS
WINNING, RIGHT? MASKS
OR EARRINGS OR
WHATEVER SHOULDN'T
MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

ANYWAY, THE WHOLE
THING'S STUPID. WHAT'S
MY MASK GOT TO DO
WITH IT ANYWAY?

BUT HE WAS SO STRONG THAT EVEN WITHOUT ARMOR, HE WAS ABLE TO ACHIEVE VICTORY.

IN FACT, THE BOY'S FAMILY WAS SO POOR THAT THEY COULDN'T AFFORD A SUIT OF ARMOR...

HE WORE ONLY A PAIR OF DIRTY SLACKS AND A JERSEY.

HOWEVER, ONE YOUNG MAN CHOSE TO FIGHT WITHOUT ARMOR.

LONG AGO, IN A FARAWAY KINGDOM...

LISTEN CLOSELY.

THE BOY REFUSED THE ARMOR, SAYING THAT NOT HAVING TO RELY ON IT HAD ACTUALLY MADE HIM STRONGER.

WHAT WAS THAT?!

MY LORD, THE BOY SAYS HE DOESN'T NEED IT.

I WILL REWARD THAT YOUNG MAN BY SENDING HIM A SUIT OF THE FINEST ARMOR.

SEEING THIS, THE KING WAS VERY MOVED.

HUH?

THERE SHALL BE NO MORE ARMOR! I WILL PERMIT ONLY A SINGLE PIECE OF CLOTH TO BE WRAPPED ABOUT THE WAIST.

VERY WELL! AS OF TODAY, THE RULES HAVE CHANGED!

I SEE, IN SPORTS, THERE MUST BE NO GAP BETWEEN THE RICH AND THE POOR. IT SHOULD BE A COMPETITION OF SKILL.

AND IT WAS LATER INTRODUCED IN JAPAN.

THIS CLOTH WAS CALLED "MAWASHI," AFTER THE NAME OF THE YOUNG BOY...

Y-YES, SIR!

GOT IT?

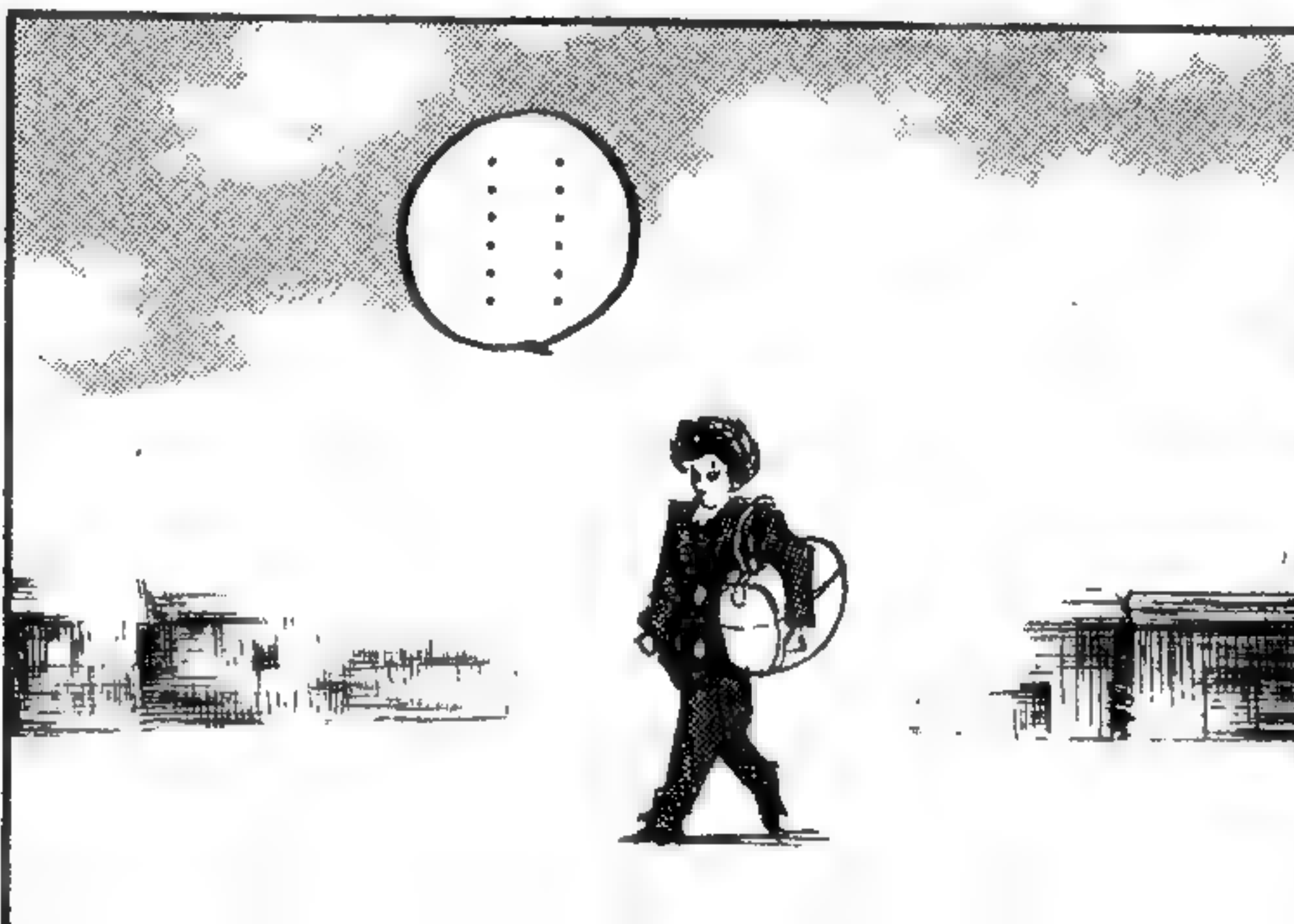
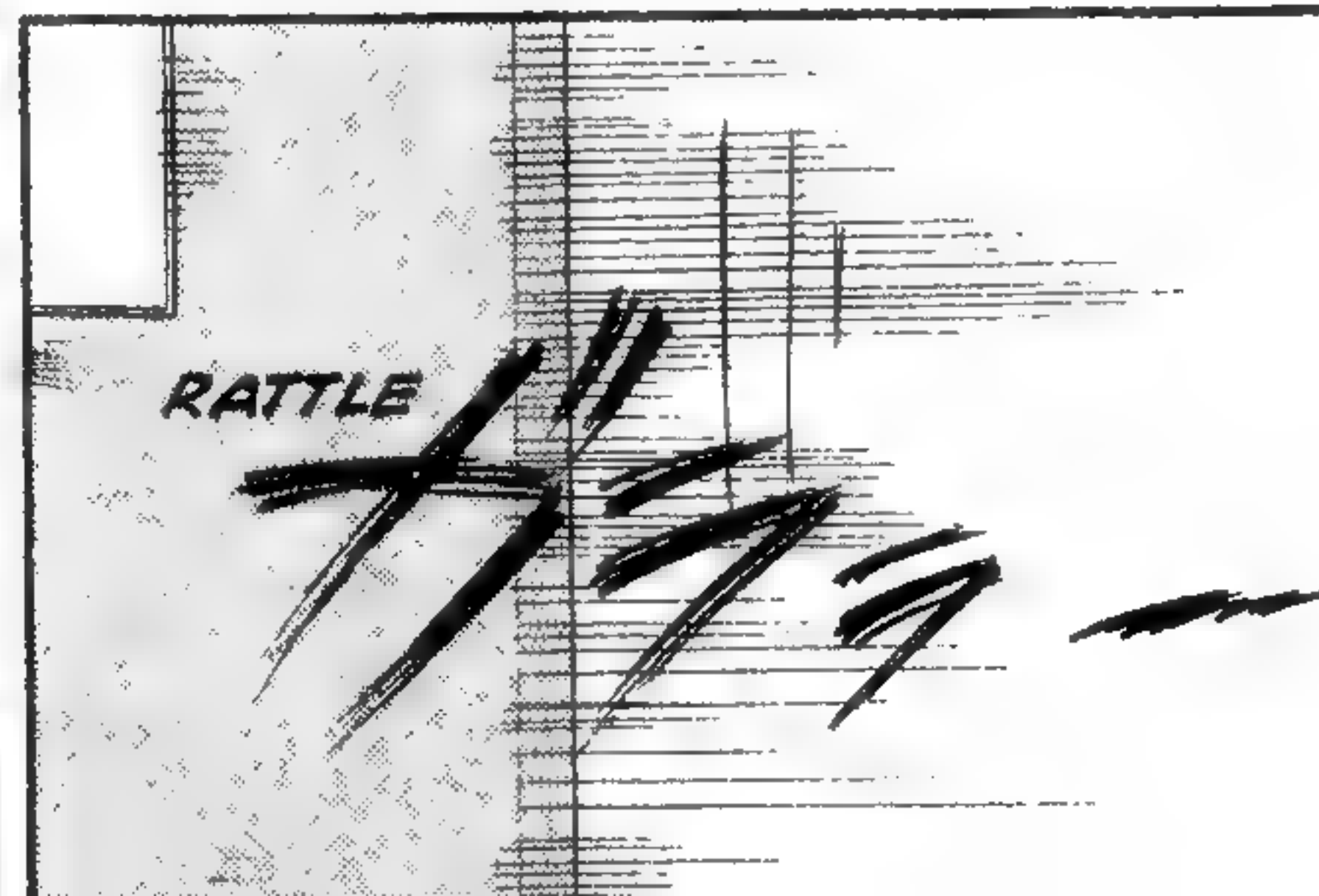
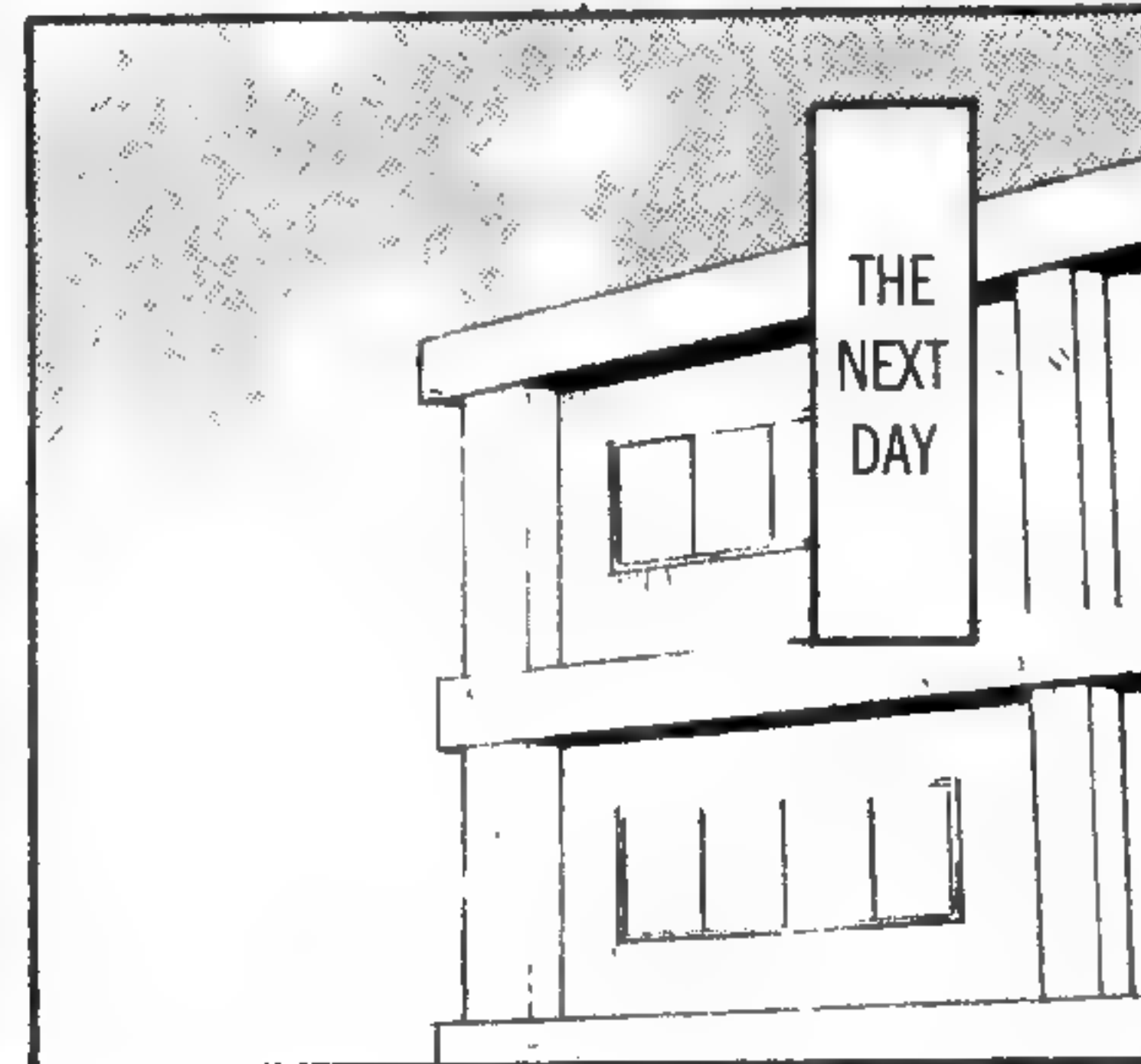
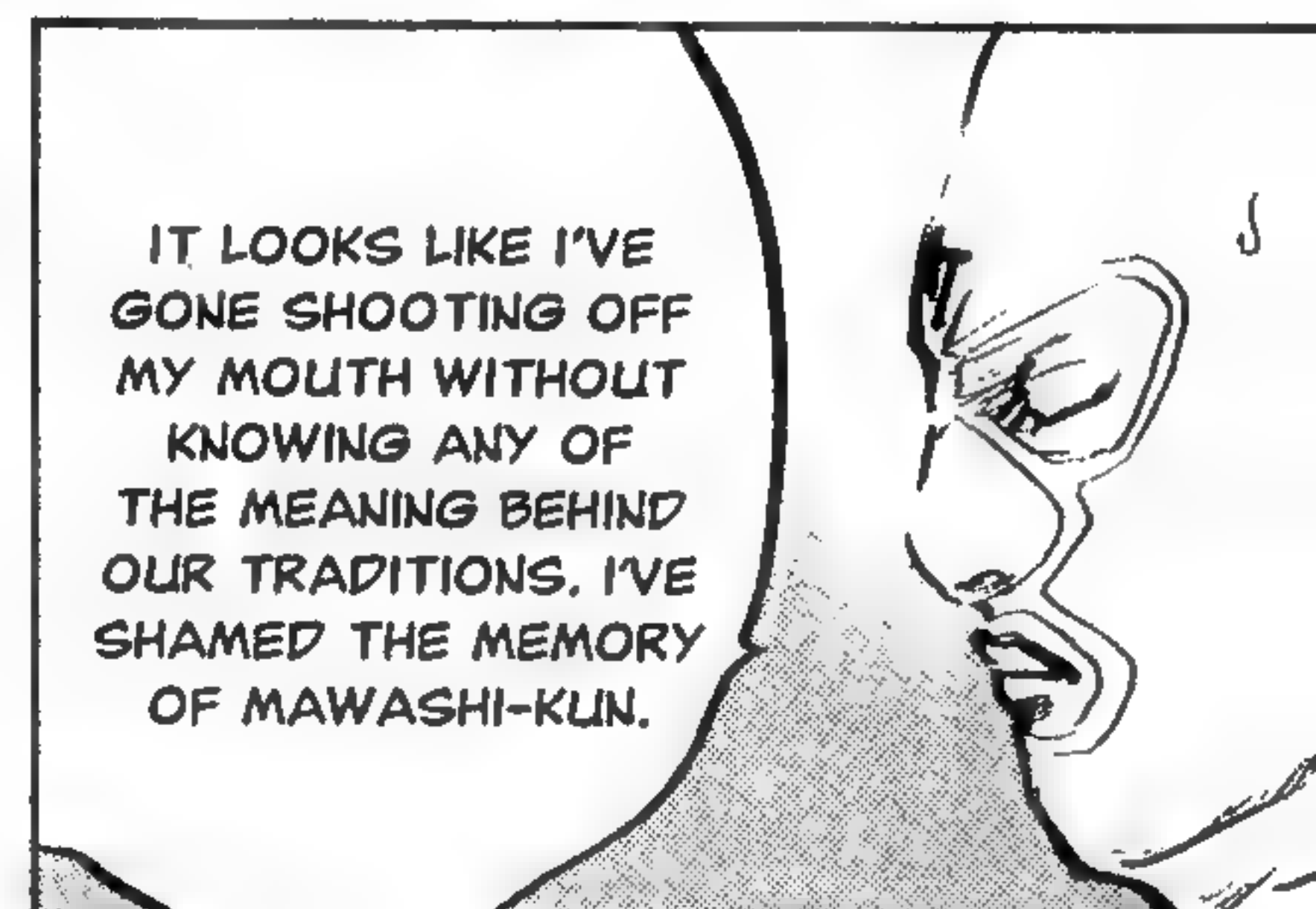
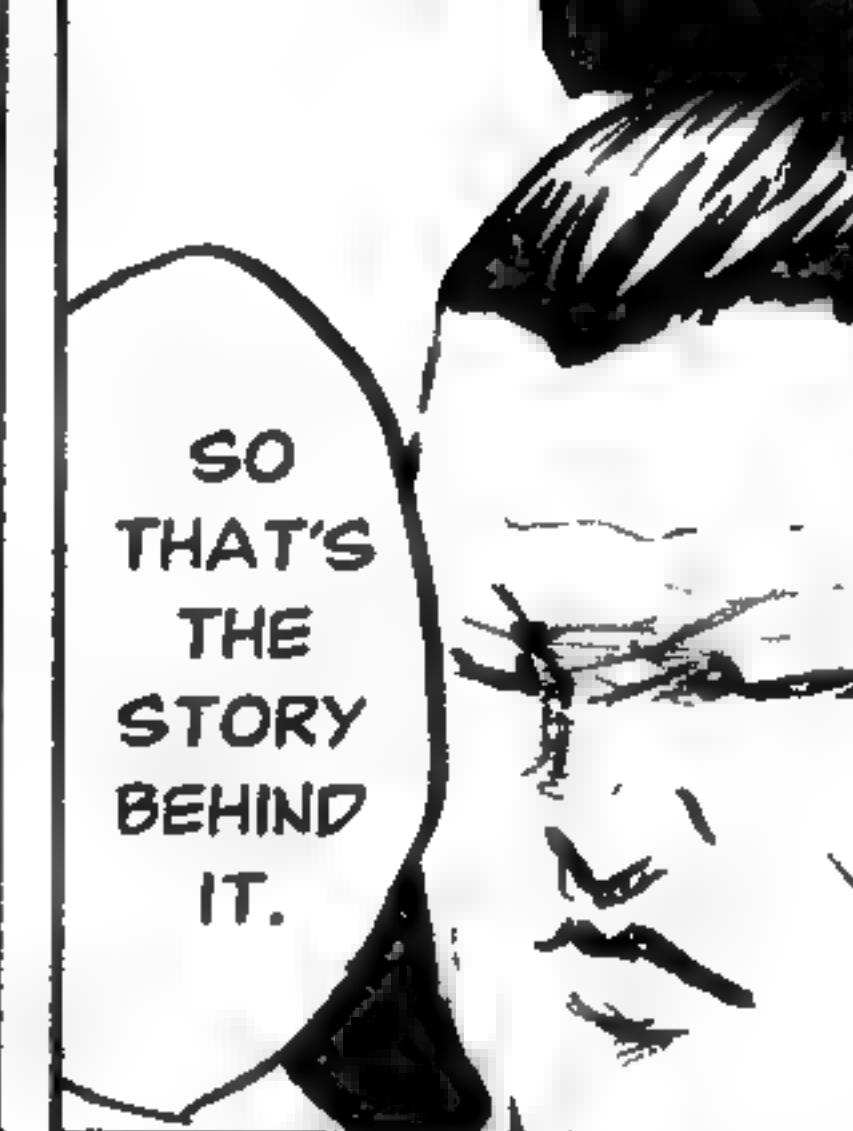
IN THIS WAY, THE POOR CAN COMPETE AS EQUALS, BASED SOLELY ON THE MERITS OF THEIR SKILL.

IT WAS PERFORMED WEARING ARMOR.

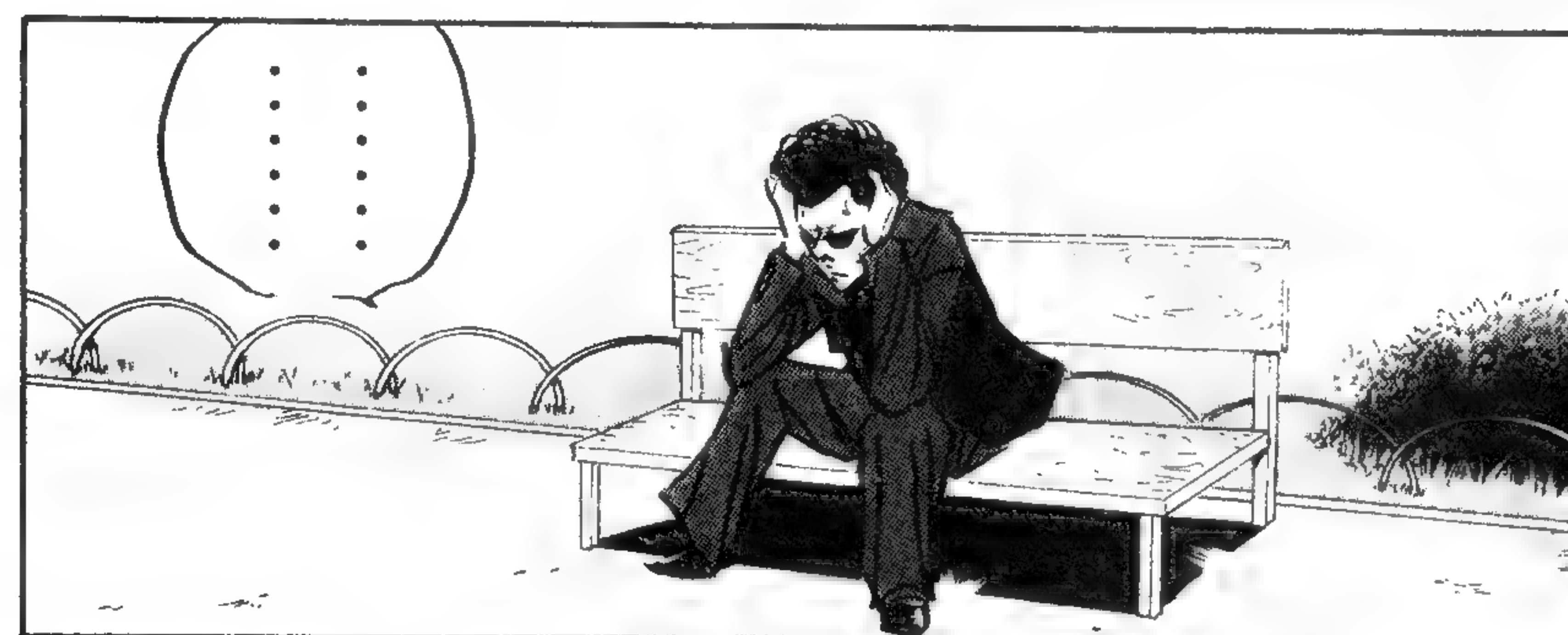
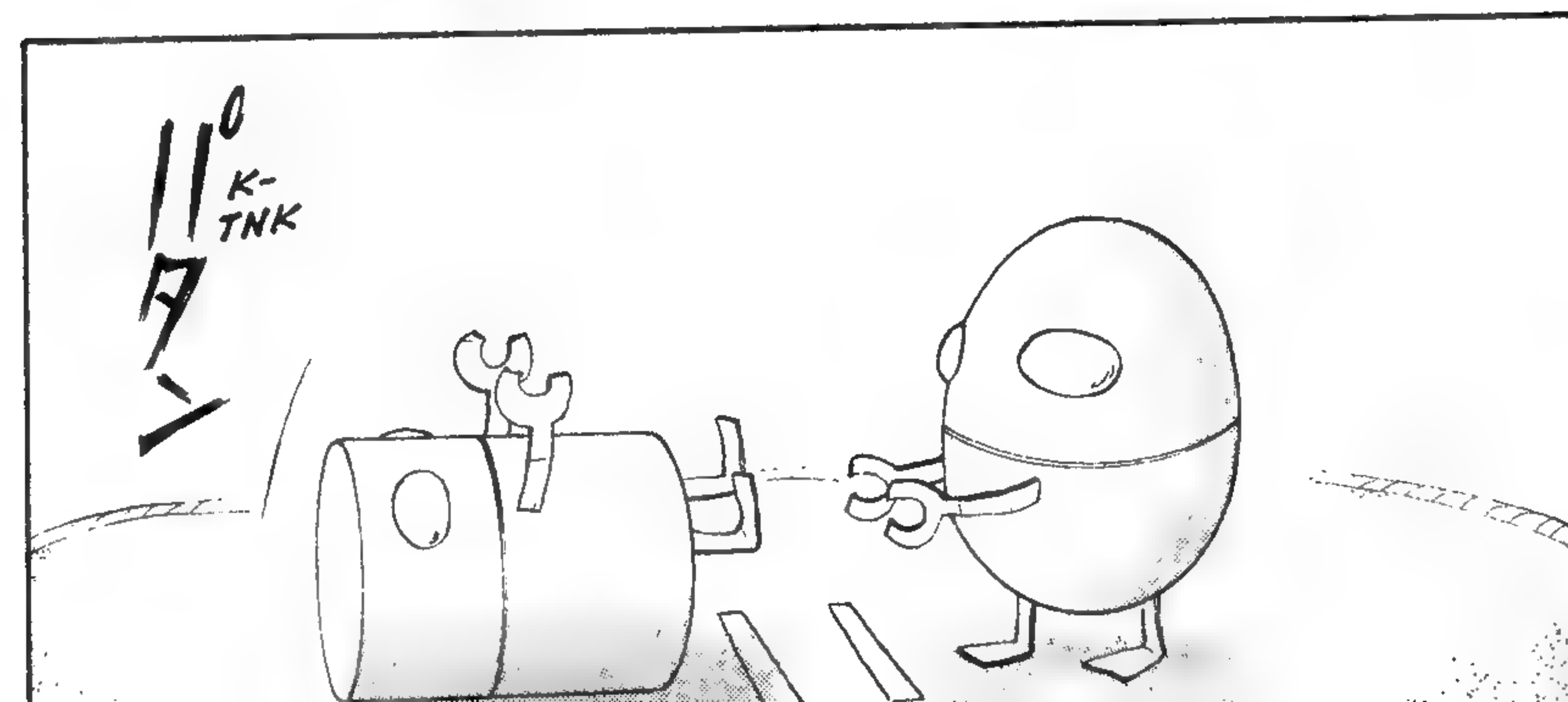
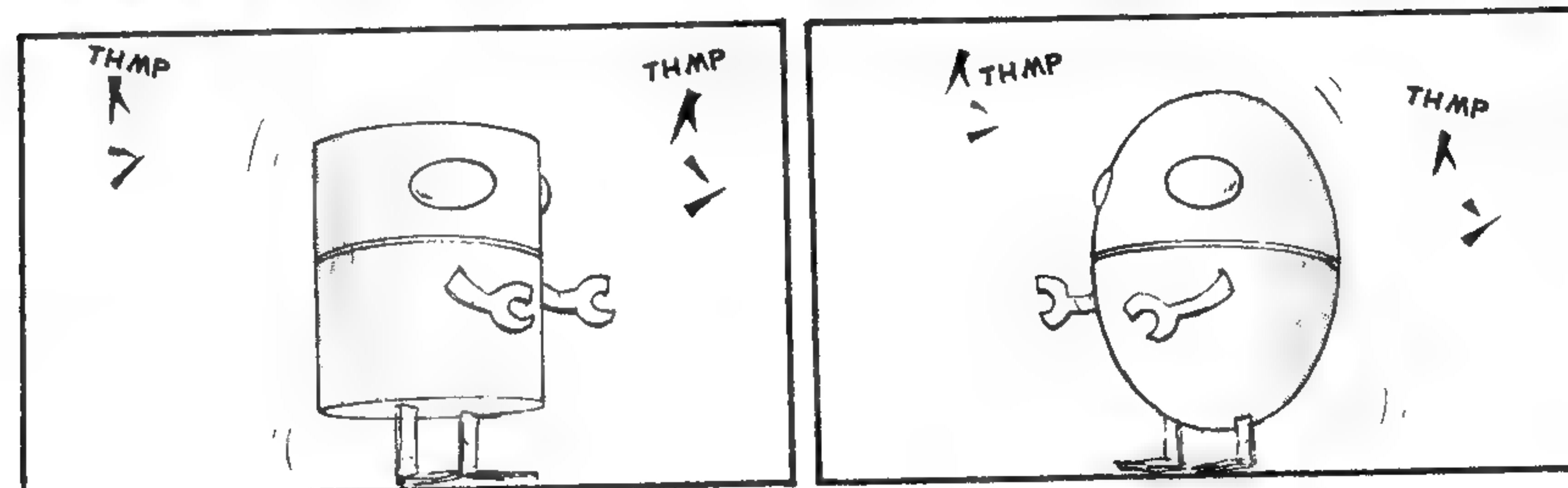
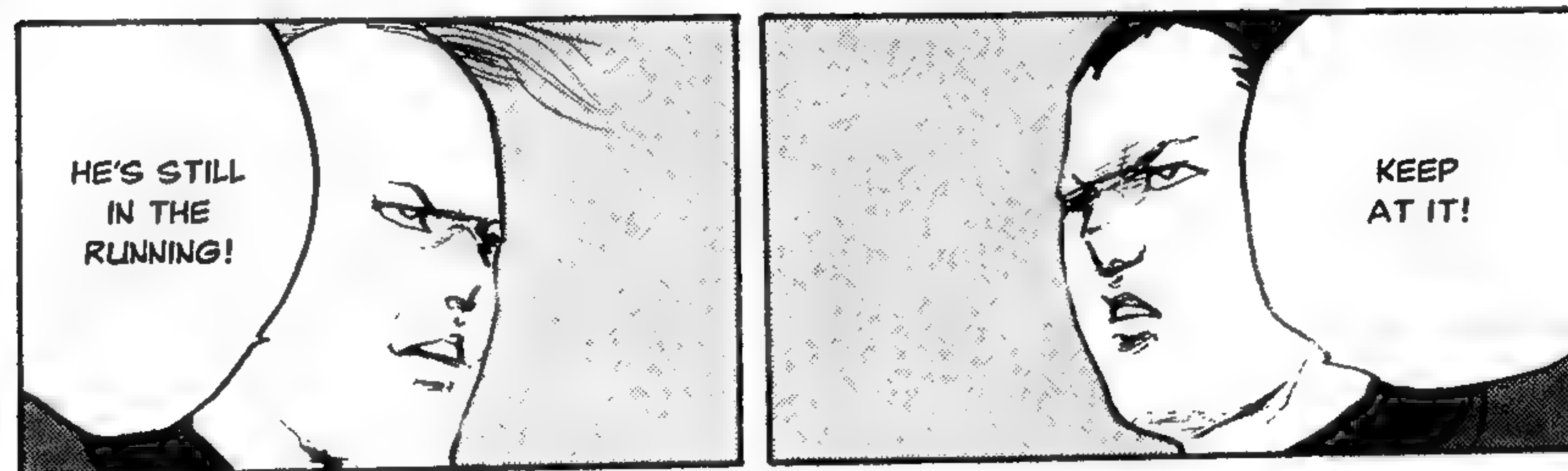
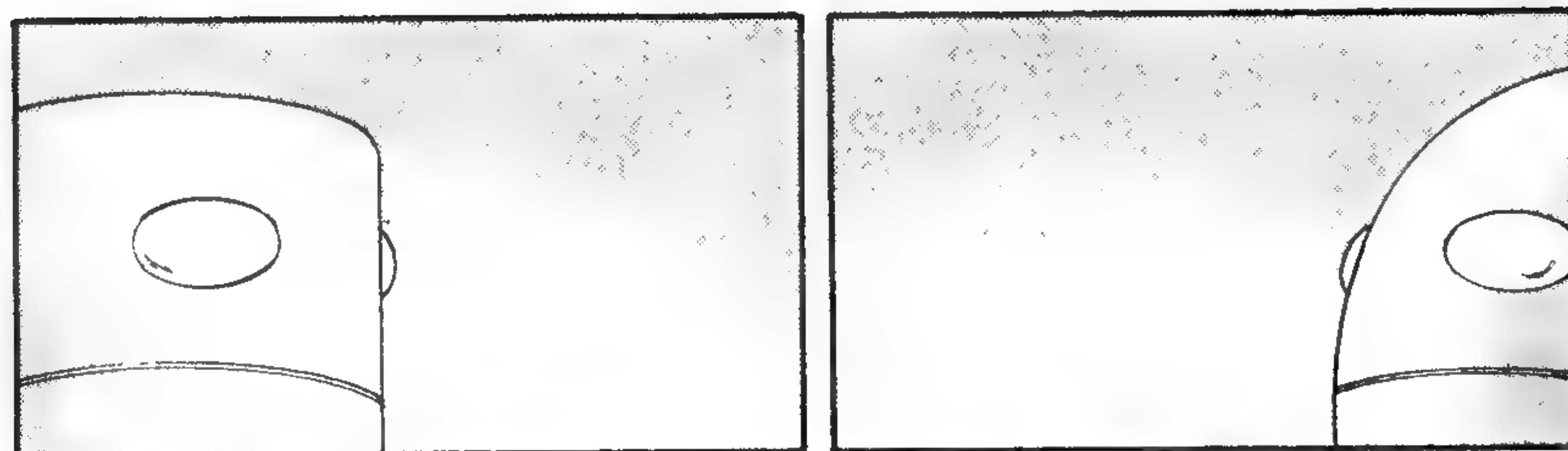
BUT UNLIKE JAPAN'S MODERN SUMO...

THERE WAS A SPORT THAT RESEMBLED SUMO.

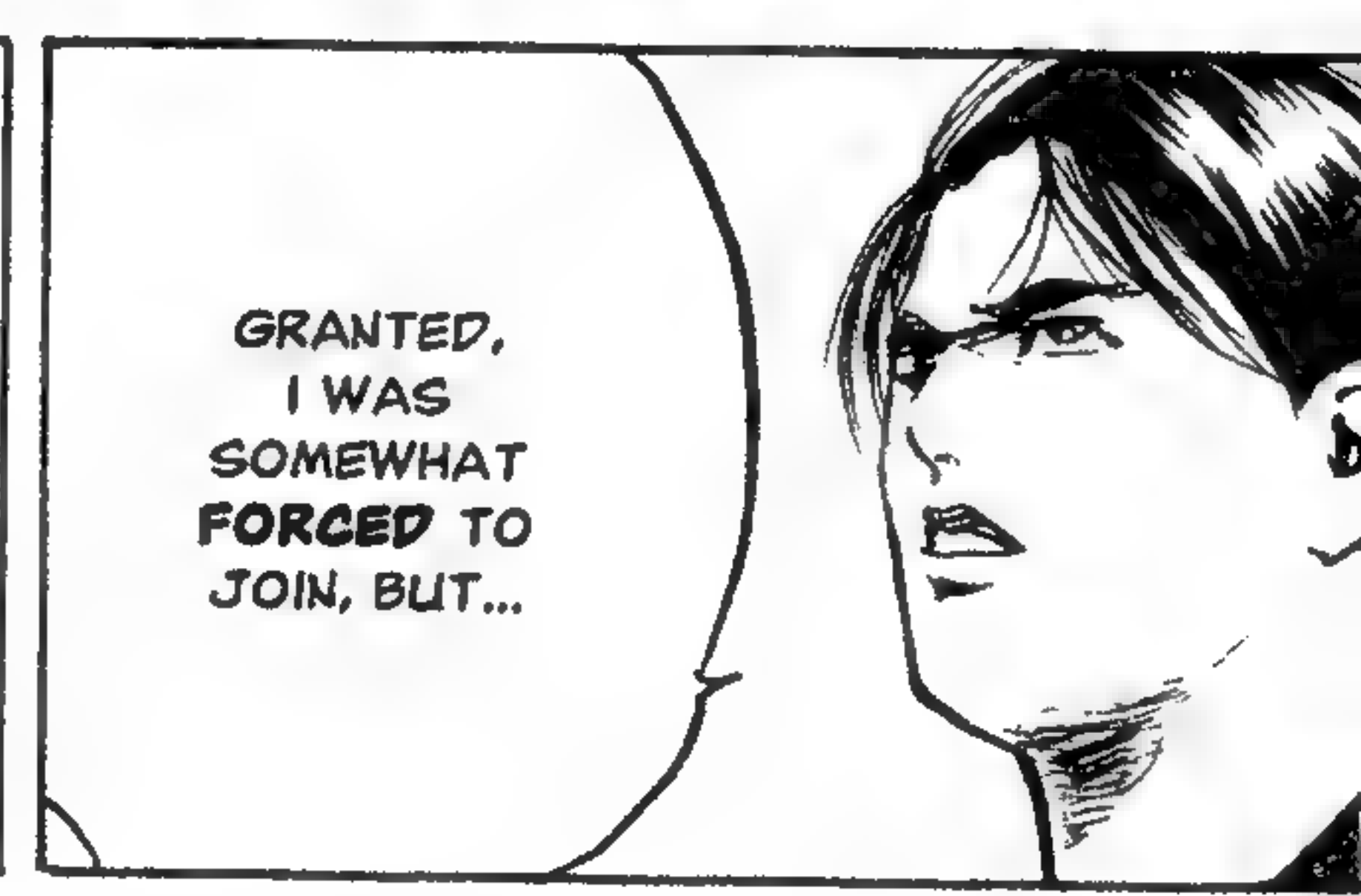
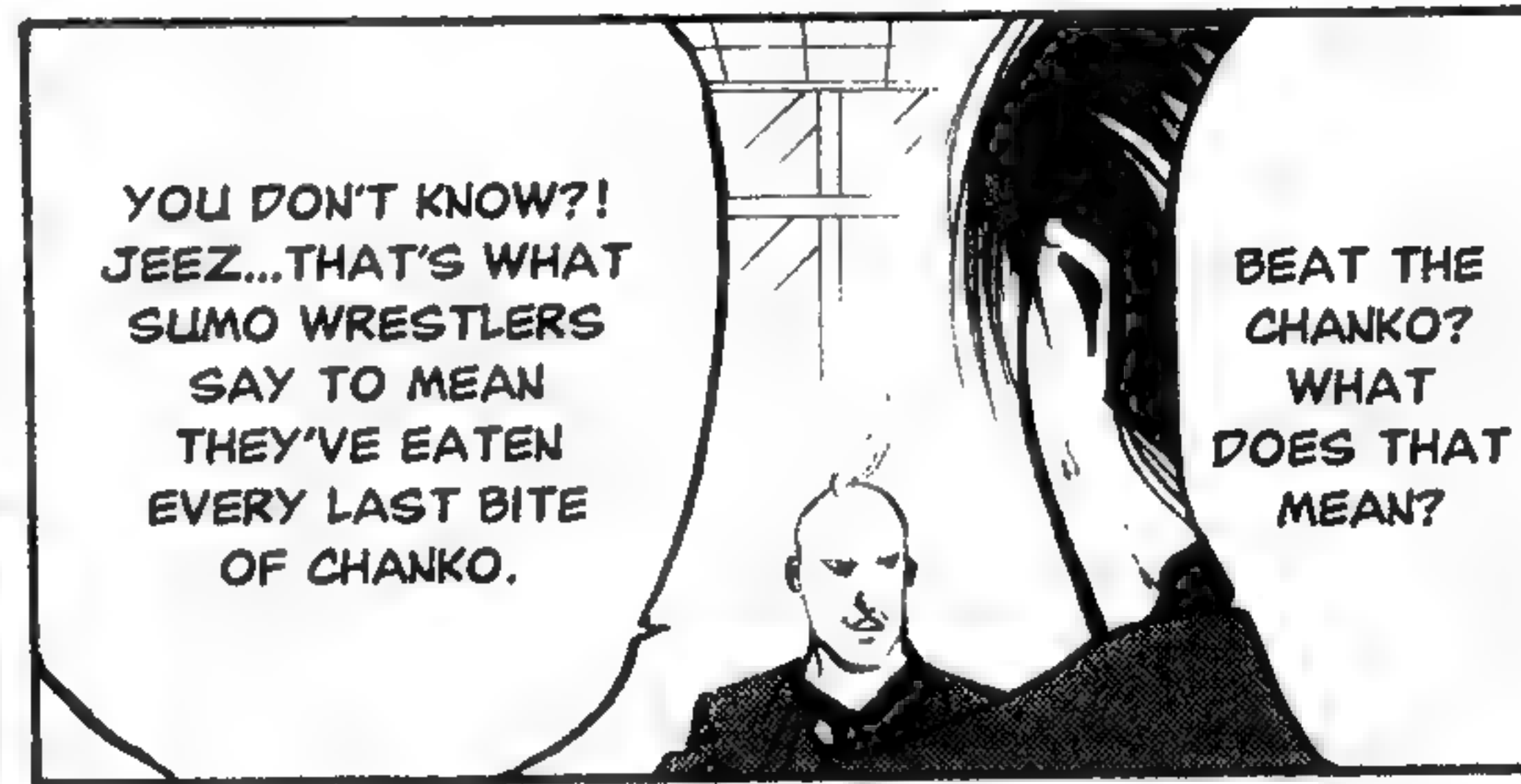
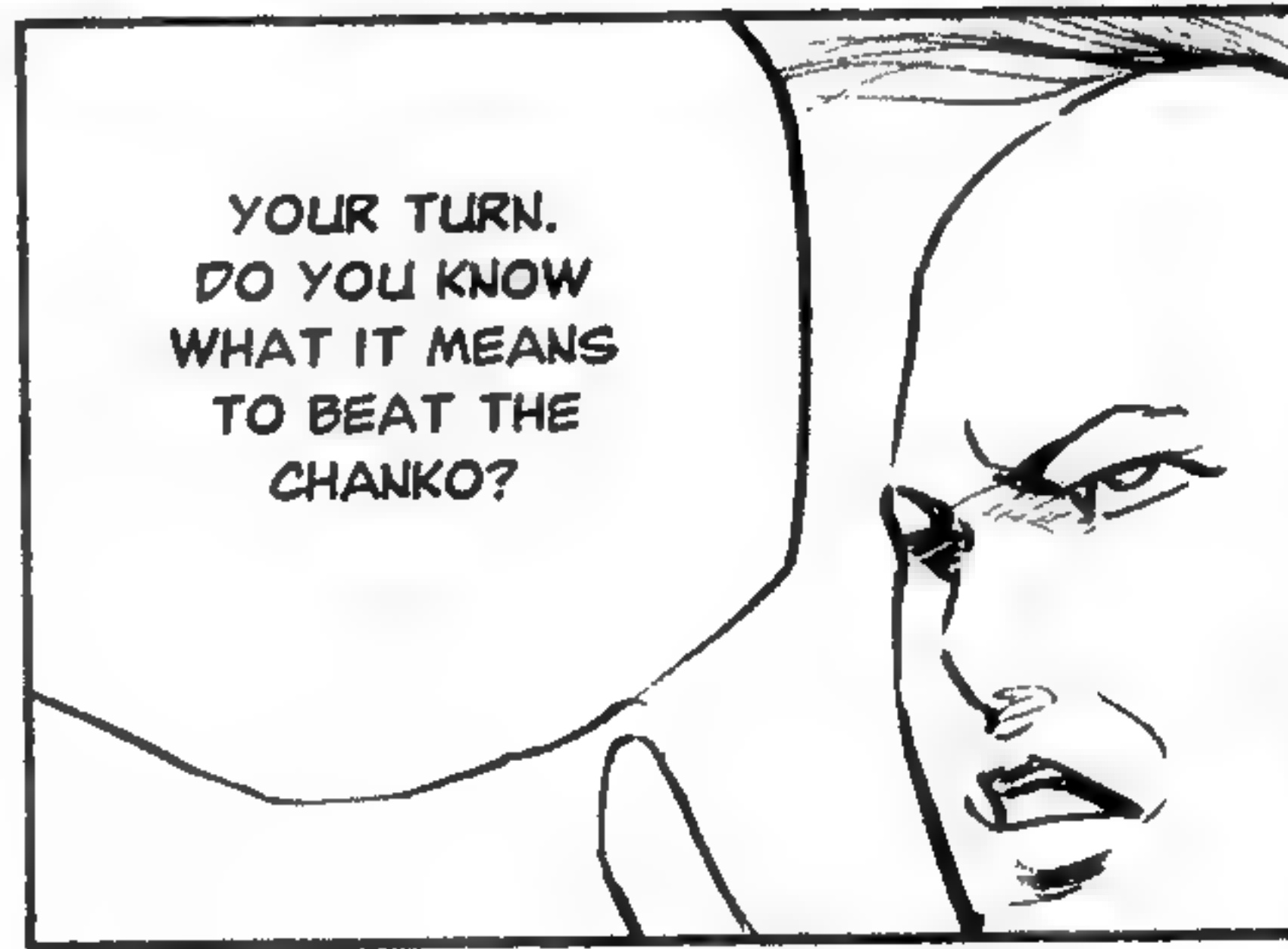
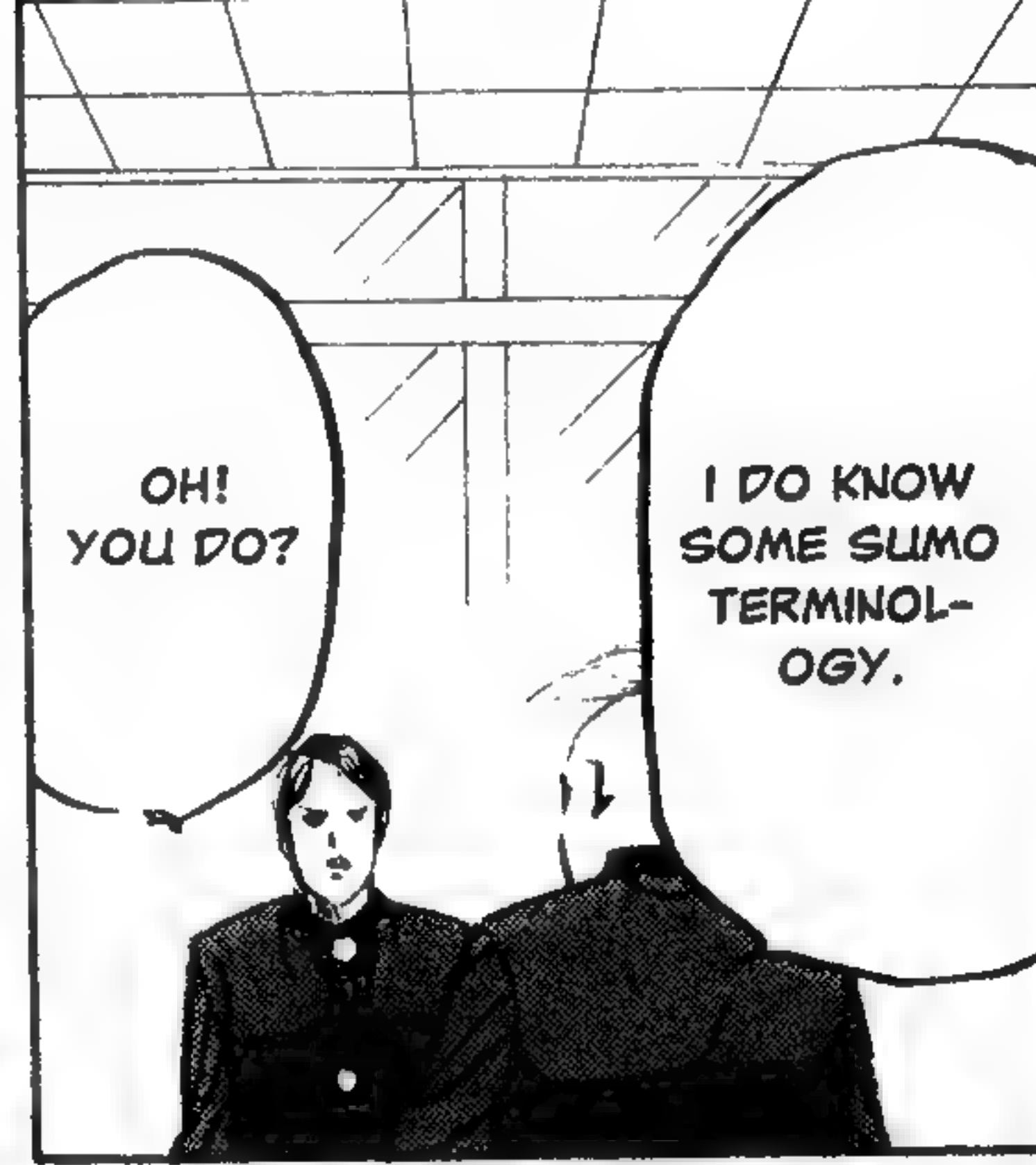
LONG, LONG AGO IN A FARAWAY KINGDOM...



CHAPTER 252: **ONE MORE TRY**



WAS THERE REALLY A MAWASHI-KUN?!





HM?

HEY!

YES,
BUT...

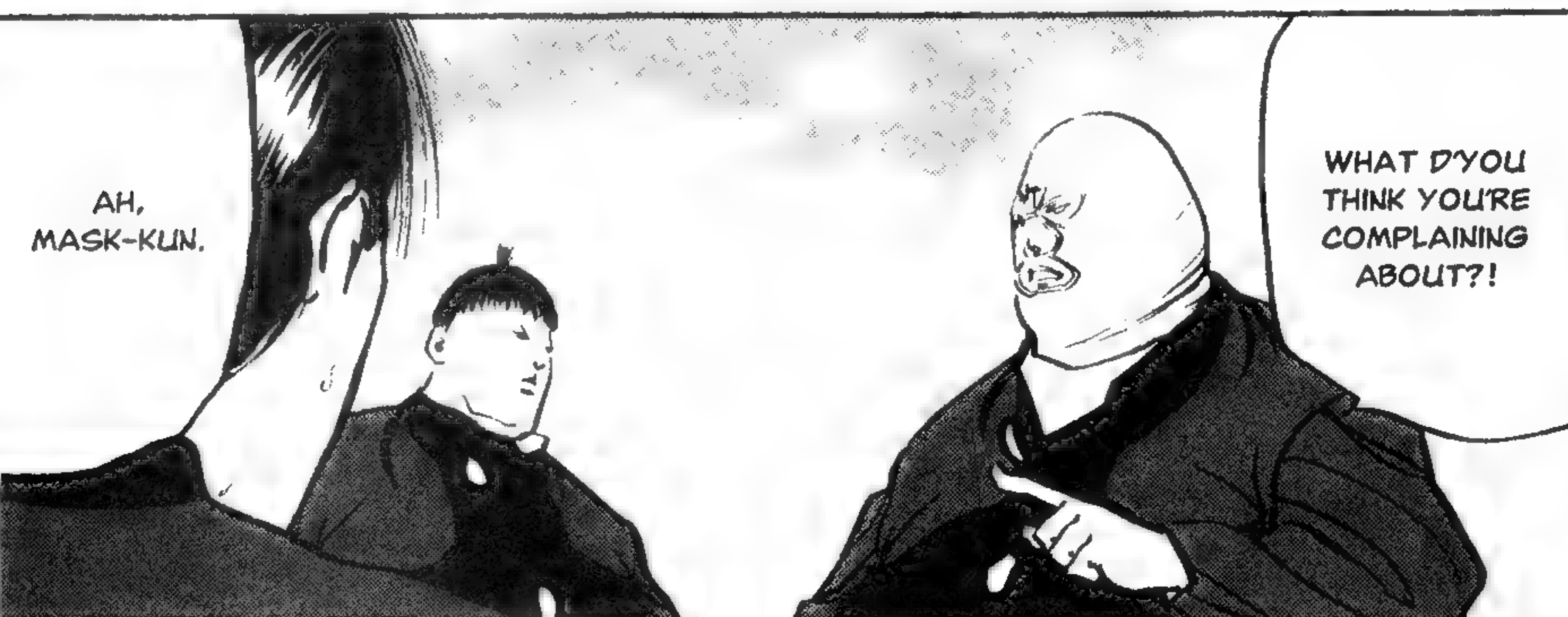
DON'T
WORRY
ABOUT IT.
FEELING
SHAME CAN
HELP PEOPLE
GROW, YOU
KNOW.

I HAVE A
FEELING I WILL
DIRTY THE
GOOD NAME
OF THE SUMO
CLUB. I'M SO
SORRY...



AH.

AND THAT'S
WHAT
HAPPENED.



AH,
MASK-KUN.

WHAT D'YOU
THINK YOU'RE
COMPLAINING
ABOUT?!



I'VE COME
TO THINK
THAT I'M
JUST NOT
SUITED
FOR IT.

I ENTERED
THE SUMO
CLUB
FILLED
WITH
DETER-
MINATION,
BUT...



BUT TAKE A
GOOD LOOK
AT ME NOW!

I DIDN'T THINK I
WAS SUITED FOR
SUMO AT FIRST
EITHER...

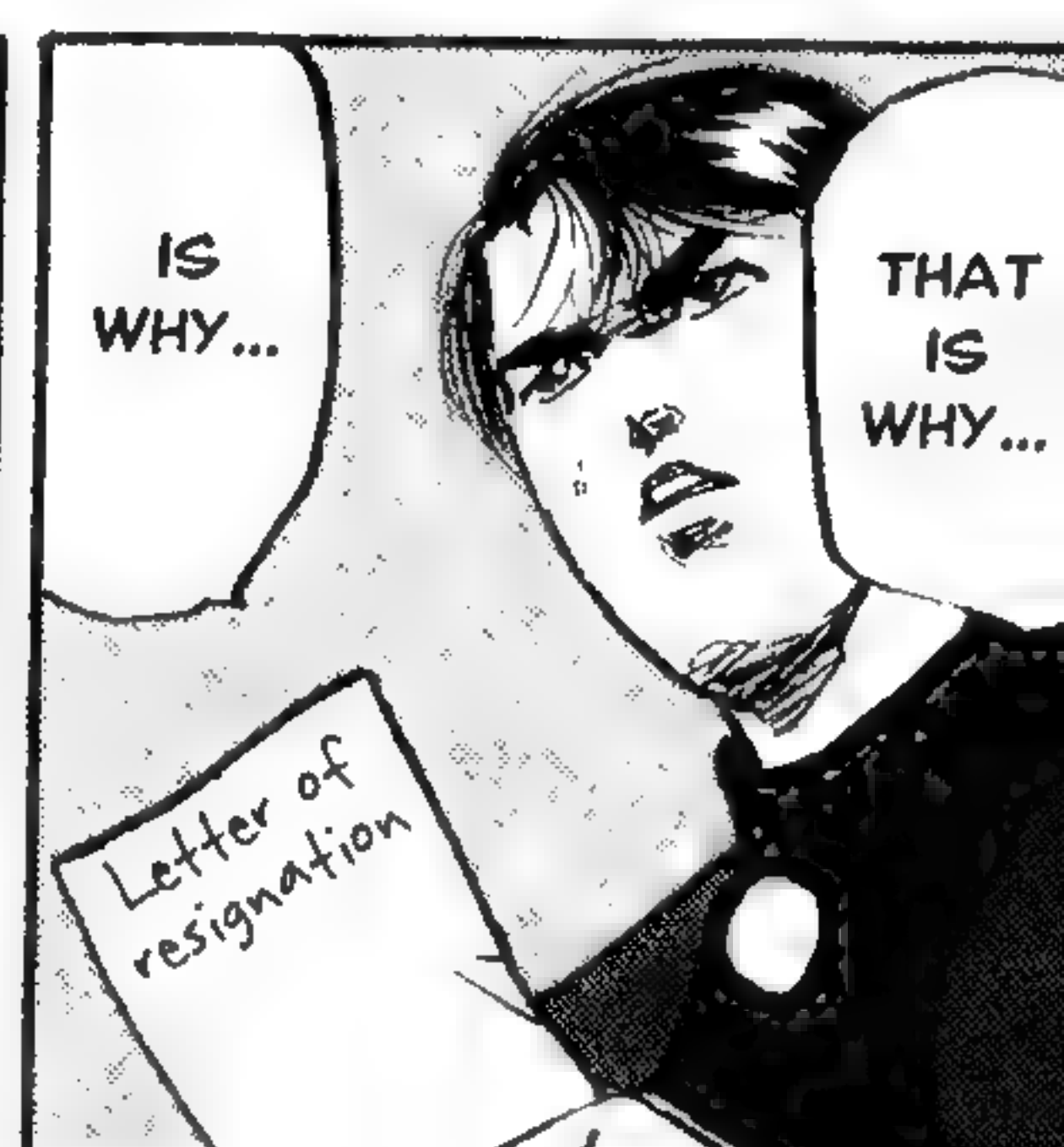


WHAT?
BUT
WHY?

I THINK I'LL
JUST HOLD
ON TO THIS
FOR NOW.



Le
resig



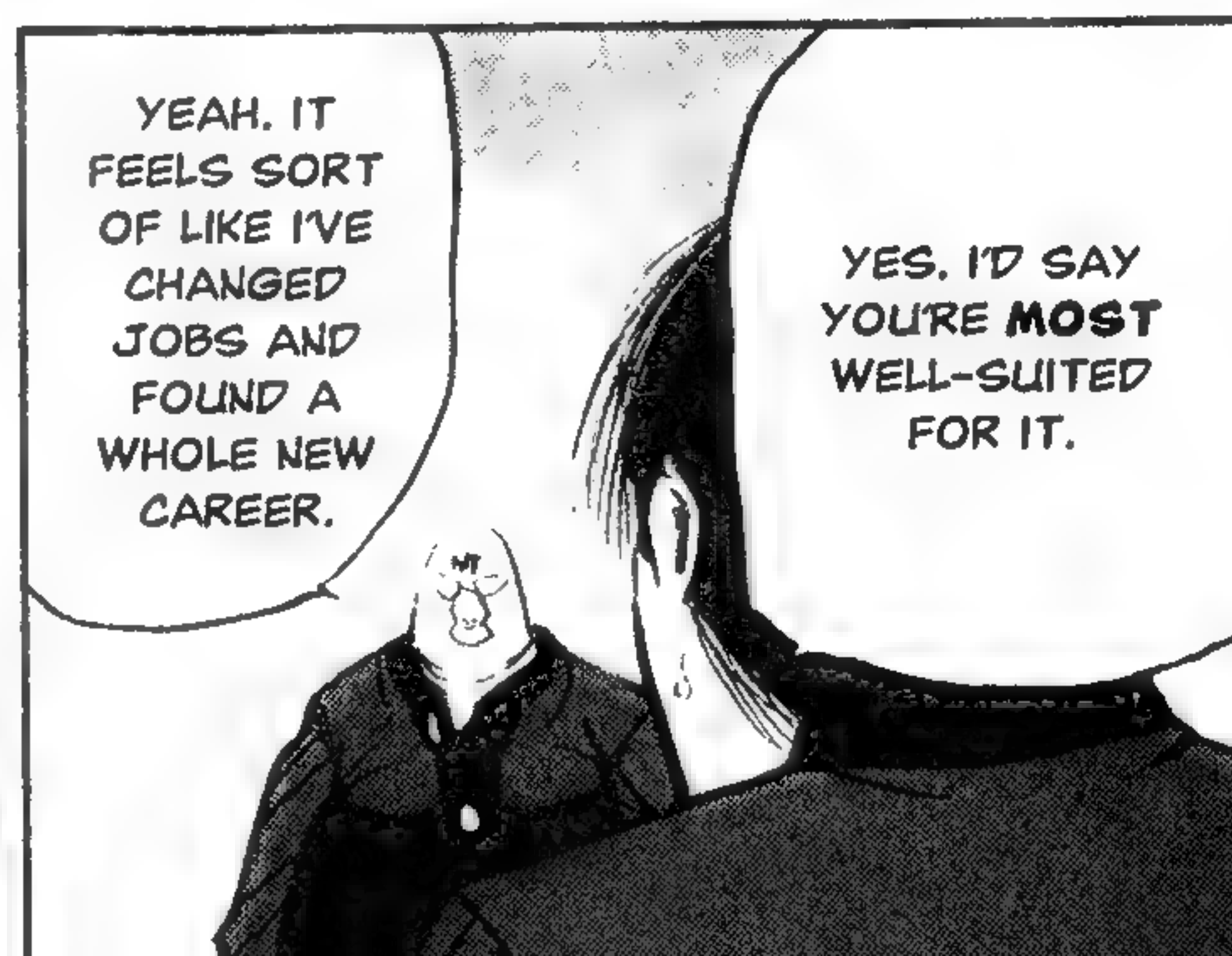
IS
WHY...

Letter of
resignation

THAT
IS
WHY...



I'M NOT GONNA
TRY TO FORCE
YOU OR ANYTHING,
BUT DO YOU THINK
YOU COULD GIVE
IT JUST A LITTLE
LONGER?



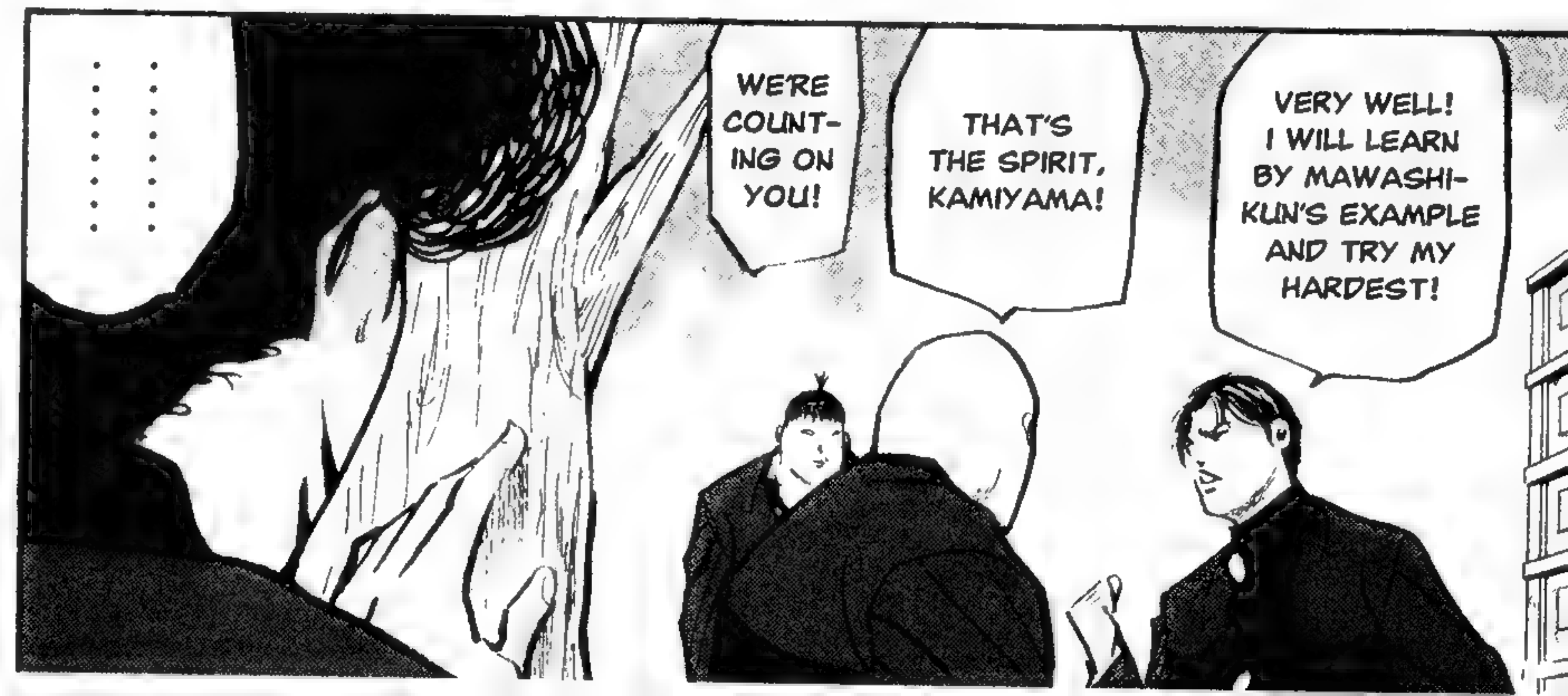
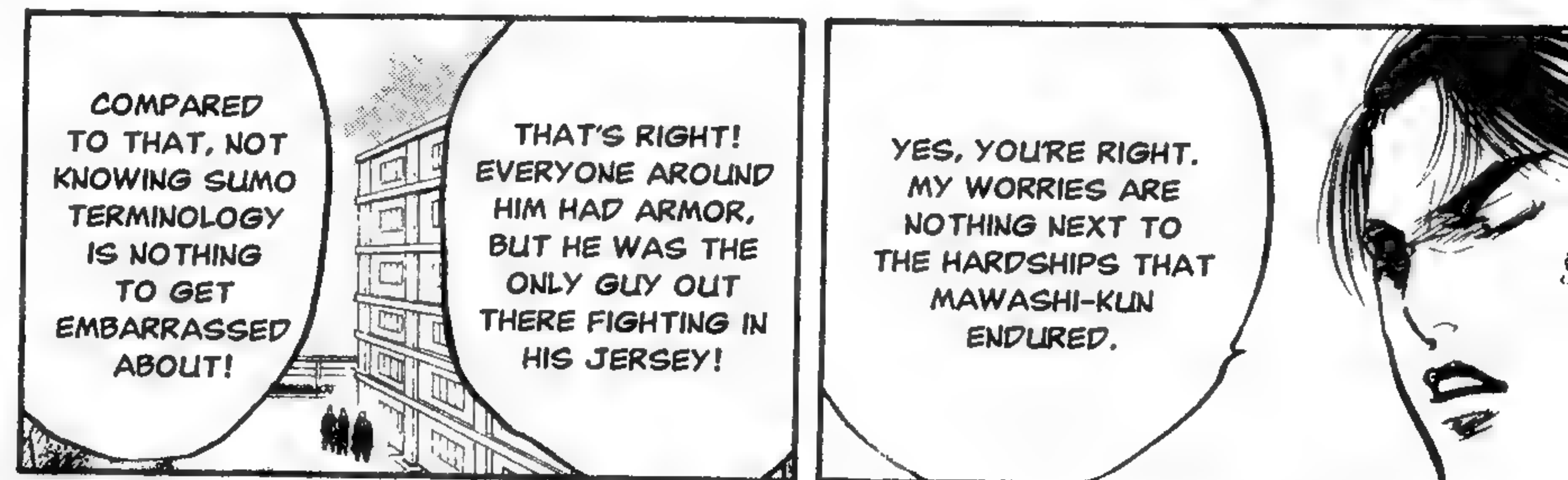
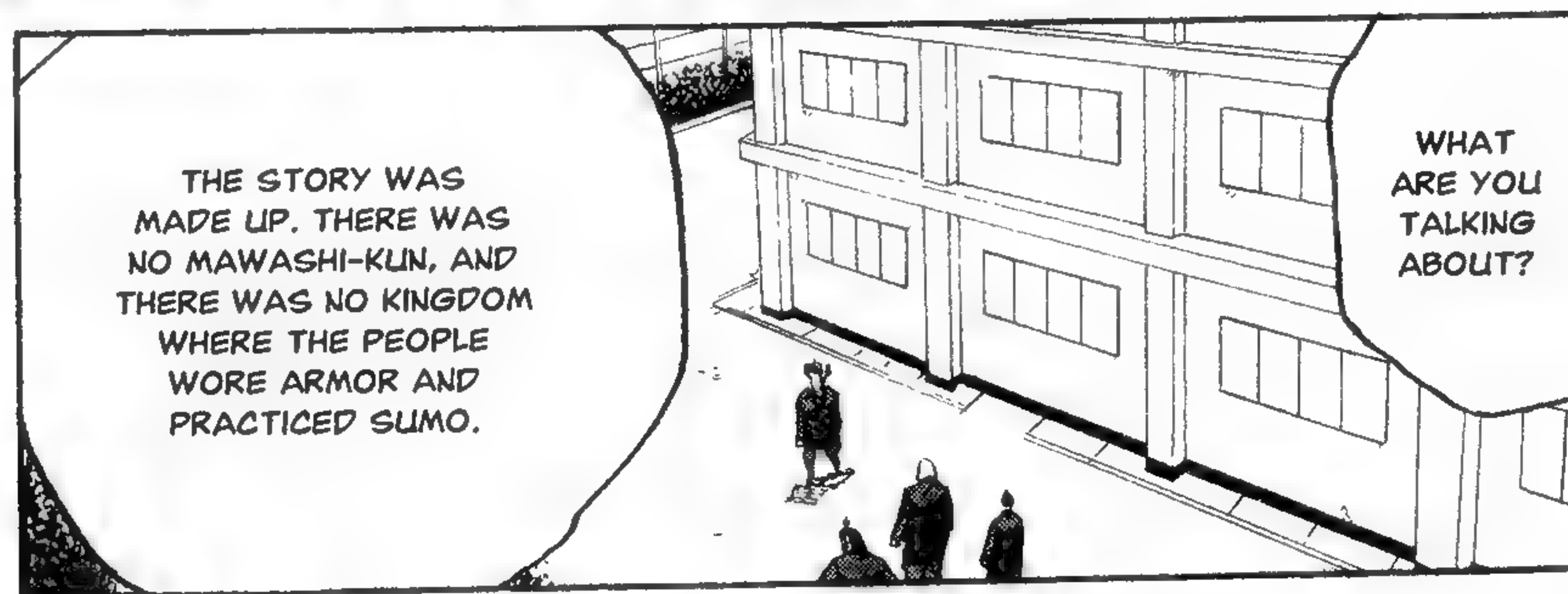
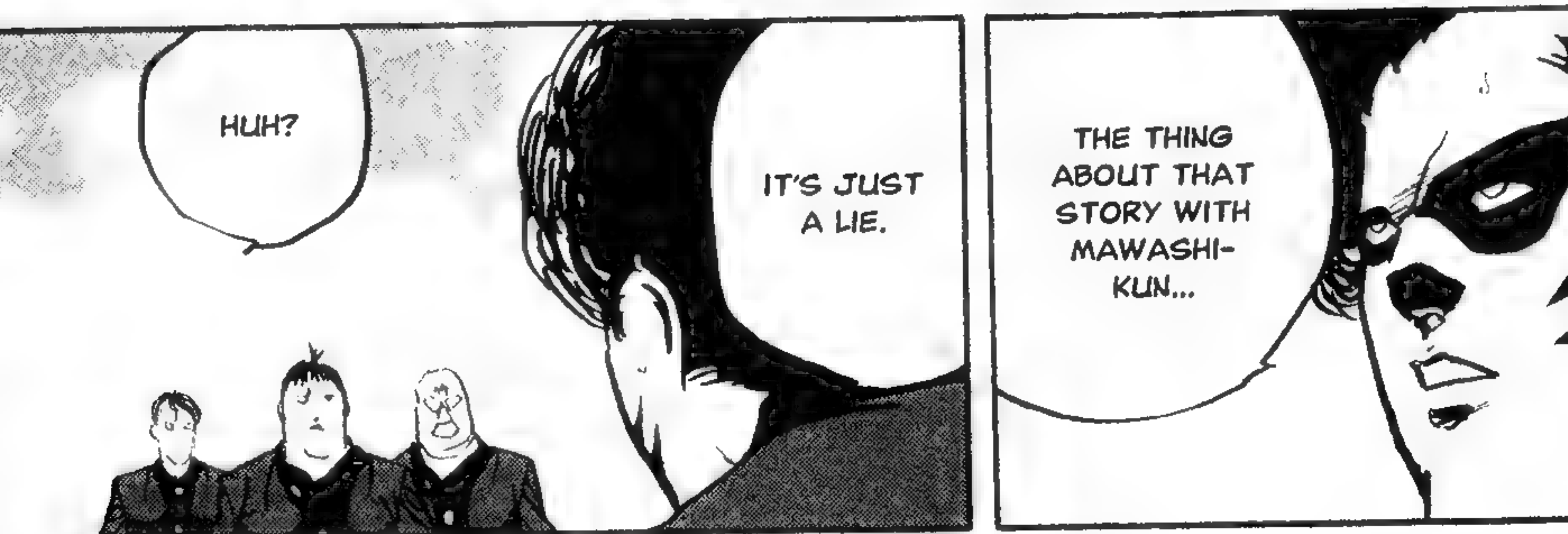
YEAH. IT
FEELS SORT
OF LIKE I'VE
CHANGED
JOBS AND
FOUND A
WHOLE NEW
CAREER.

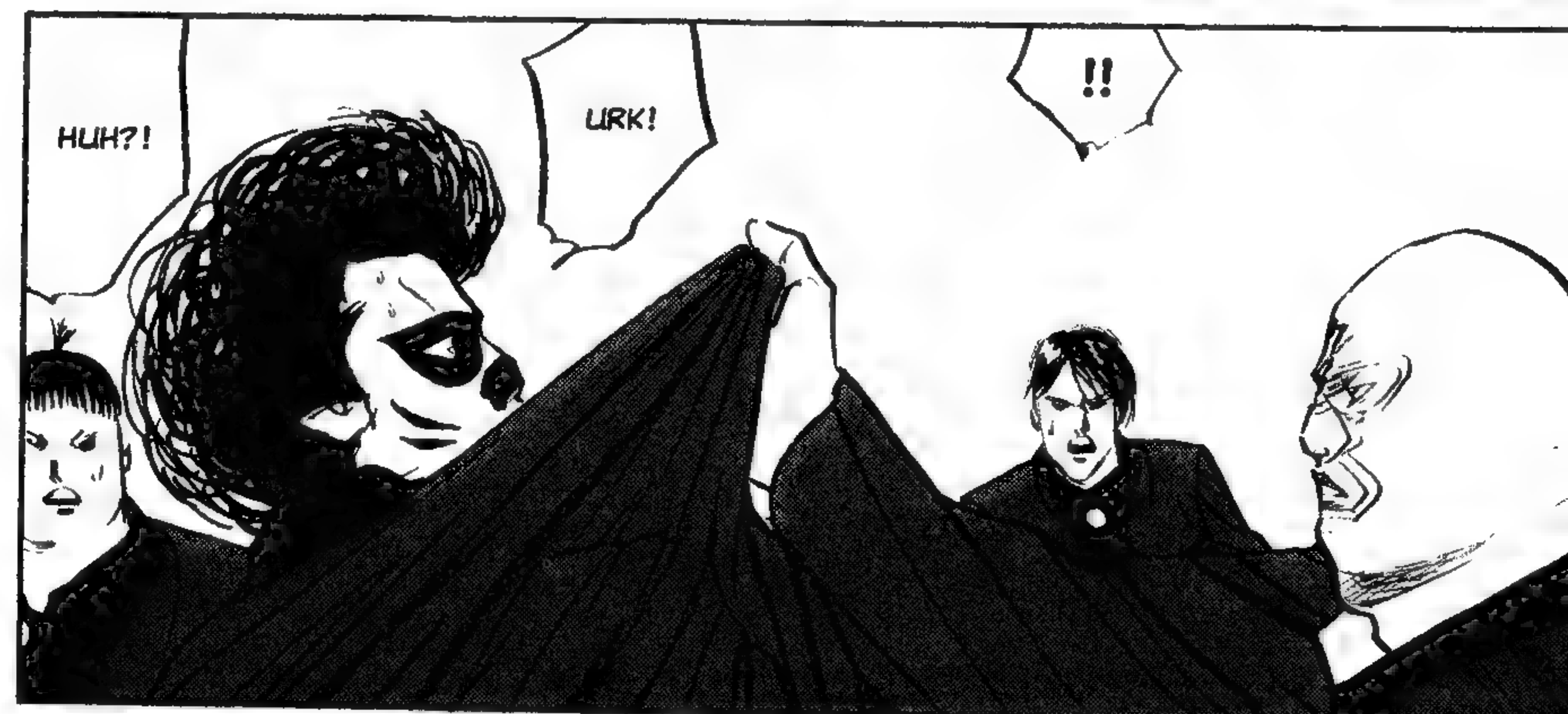
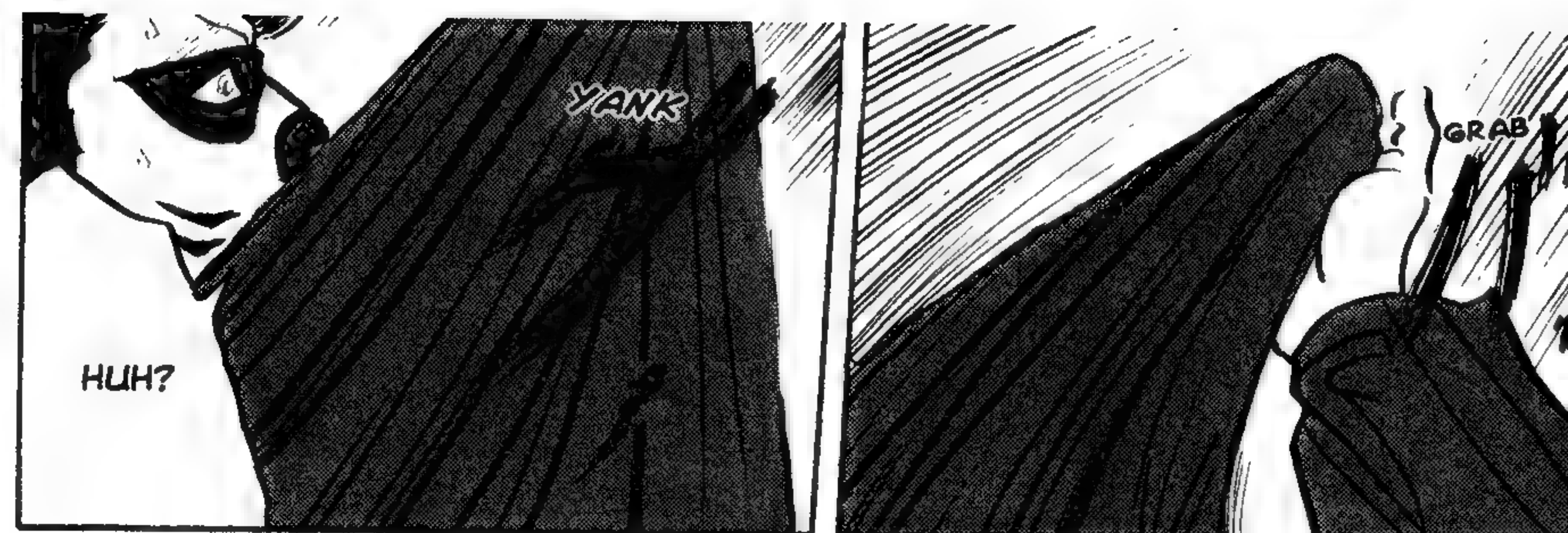
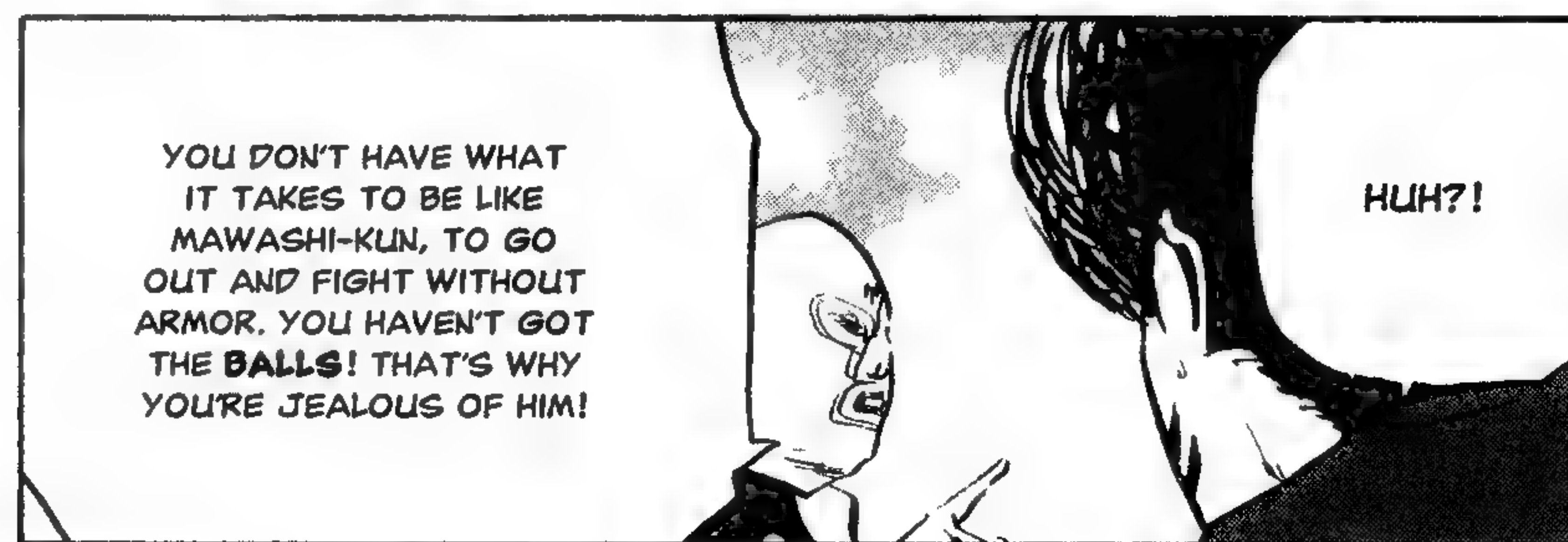
YES. I'D SAY
YOU'RE **MOST**
WELL-SUITED
FOR IT.

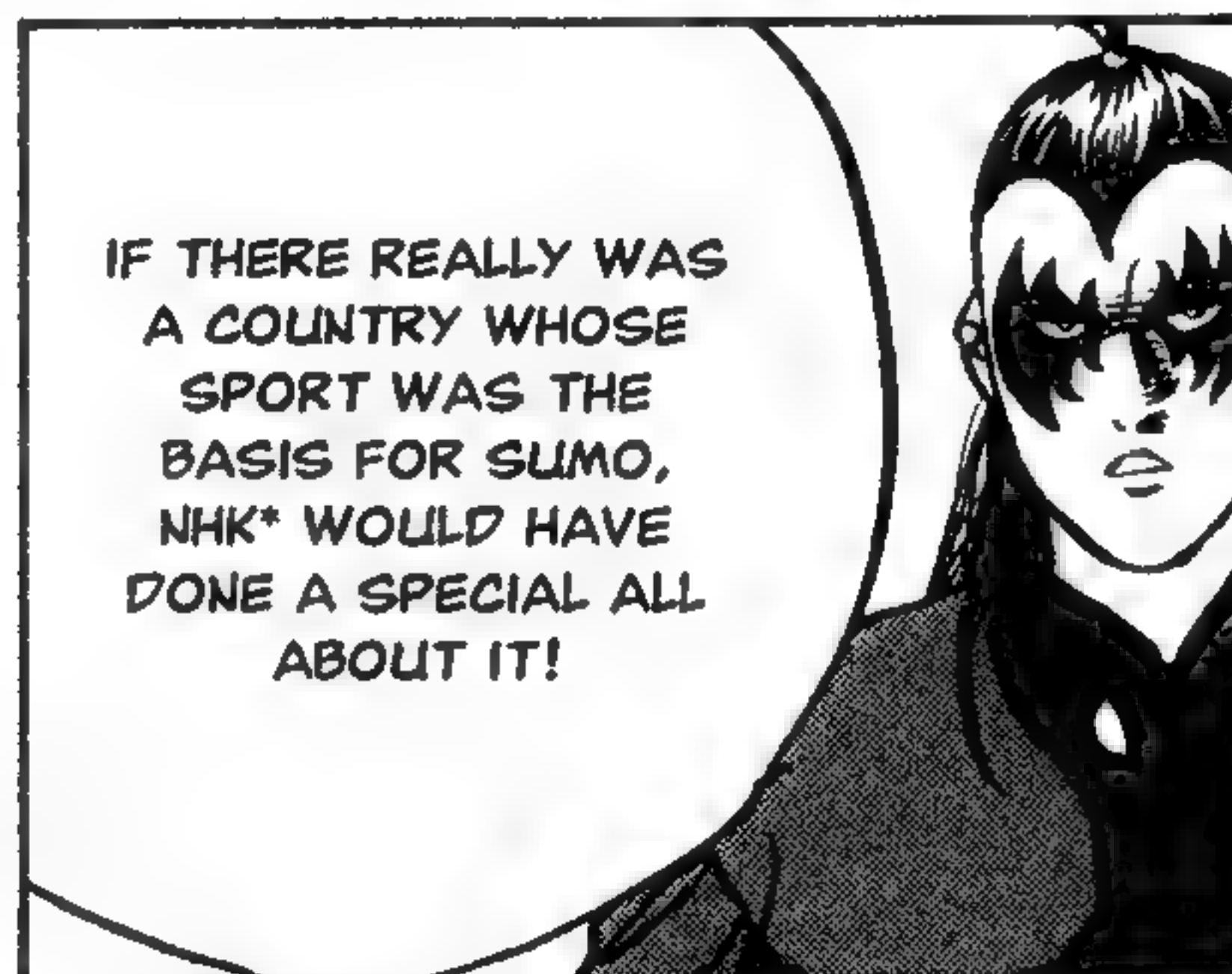
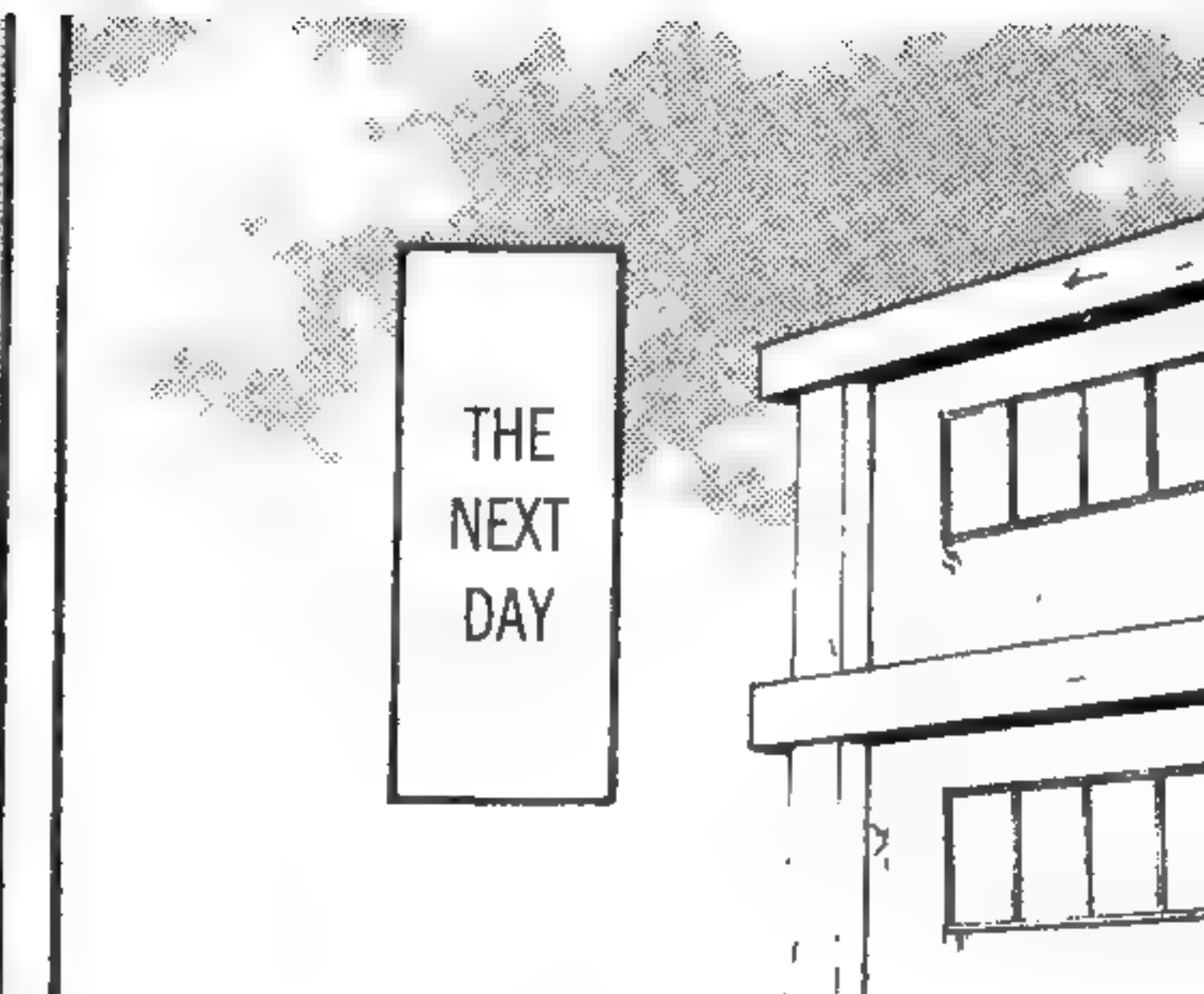
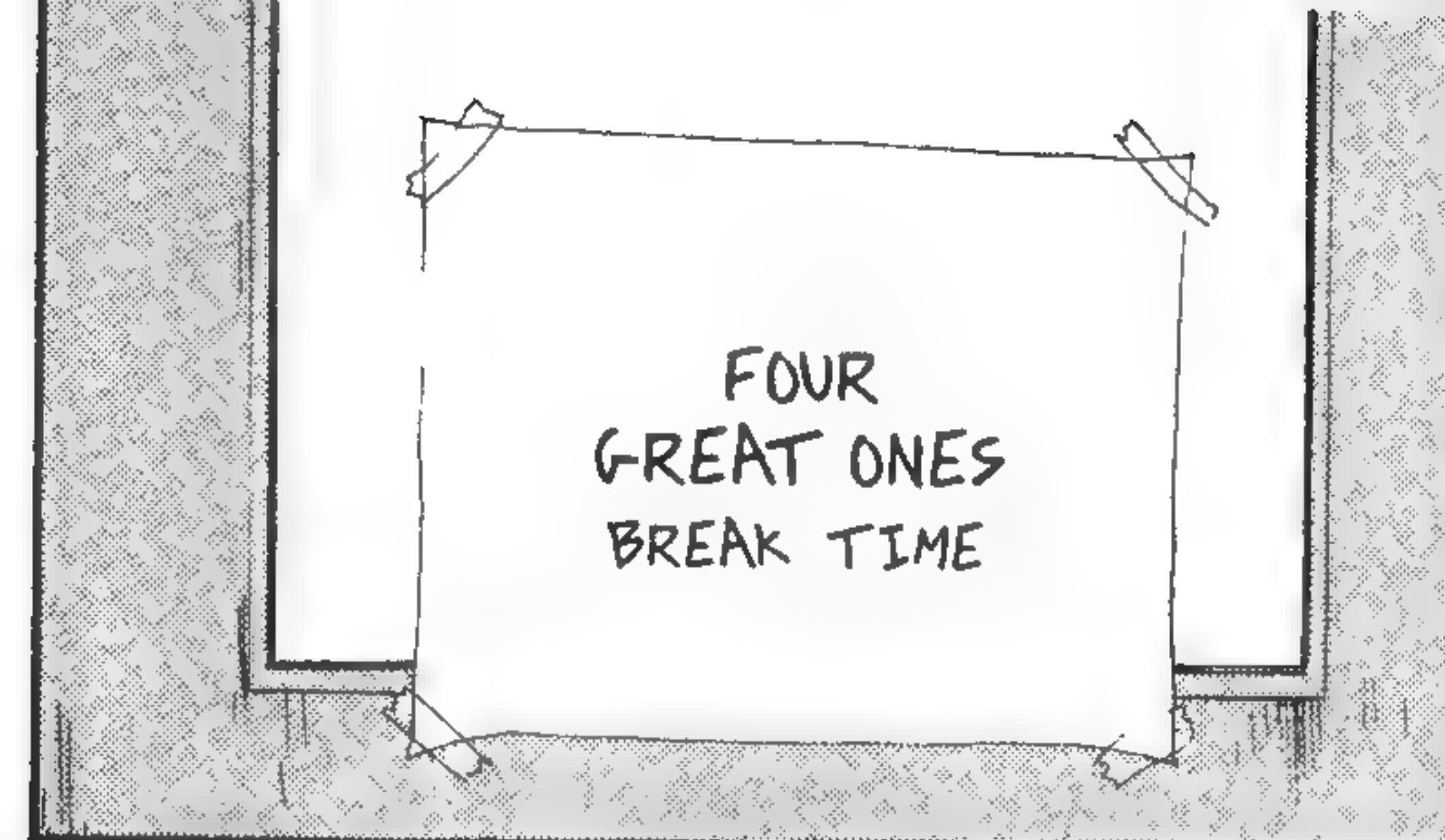
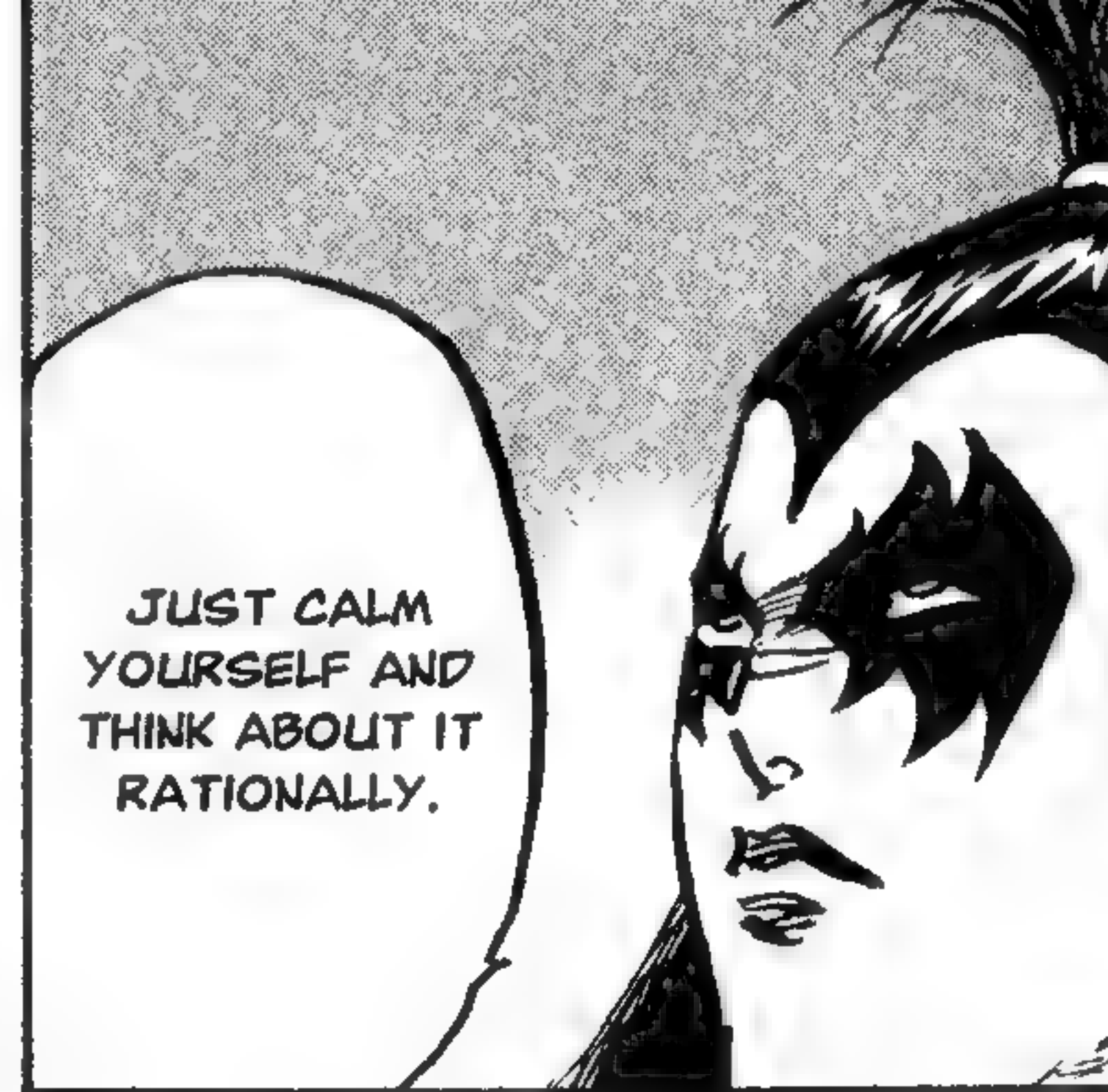
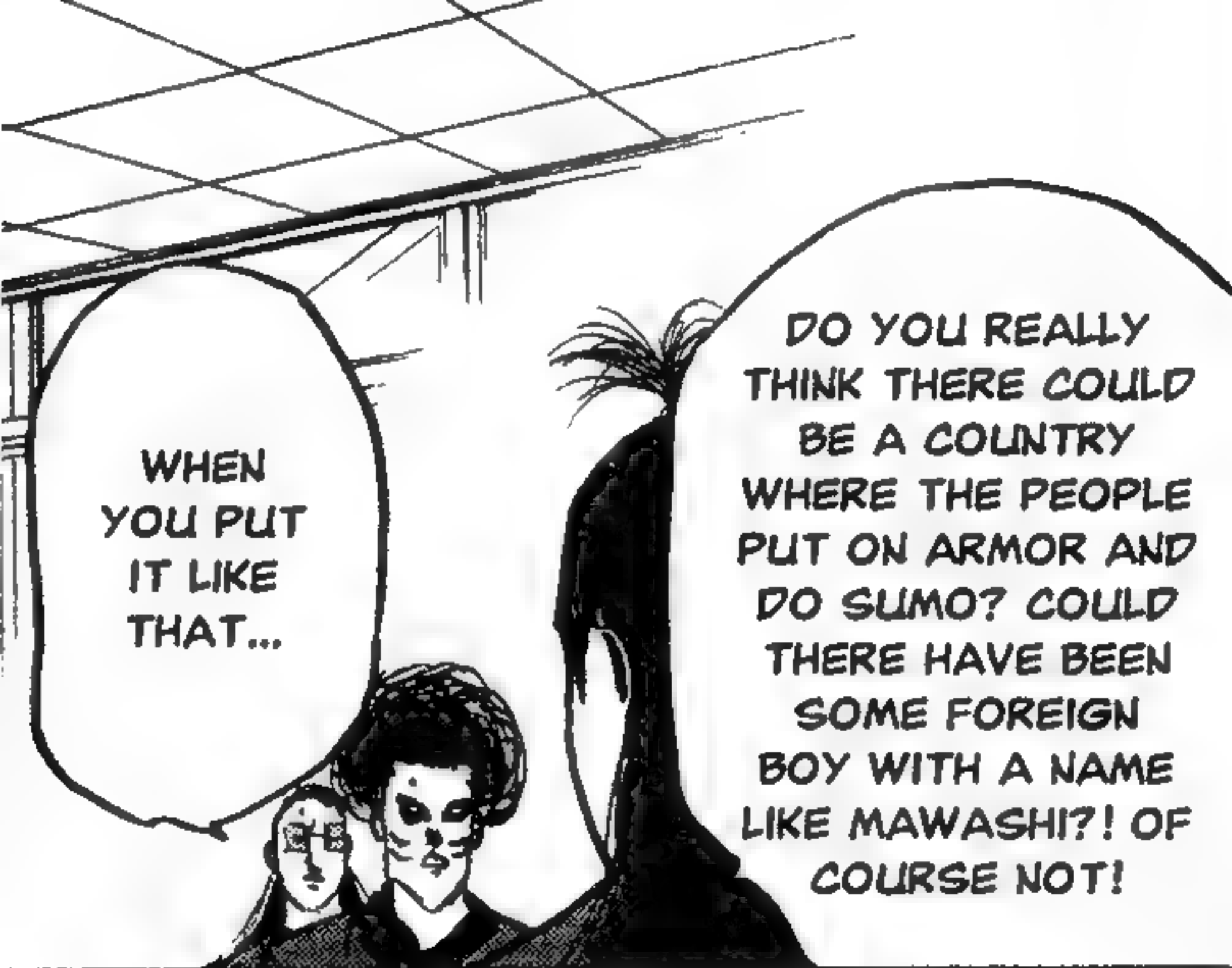


BESIDES, THERE'S NO
WAY YOU COULD KNOW
WHETHER OR NOT
YOU'RE SUITED FOR
THIS SO SOON AFTER
JOINING.

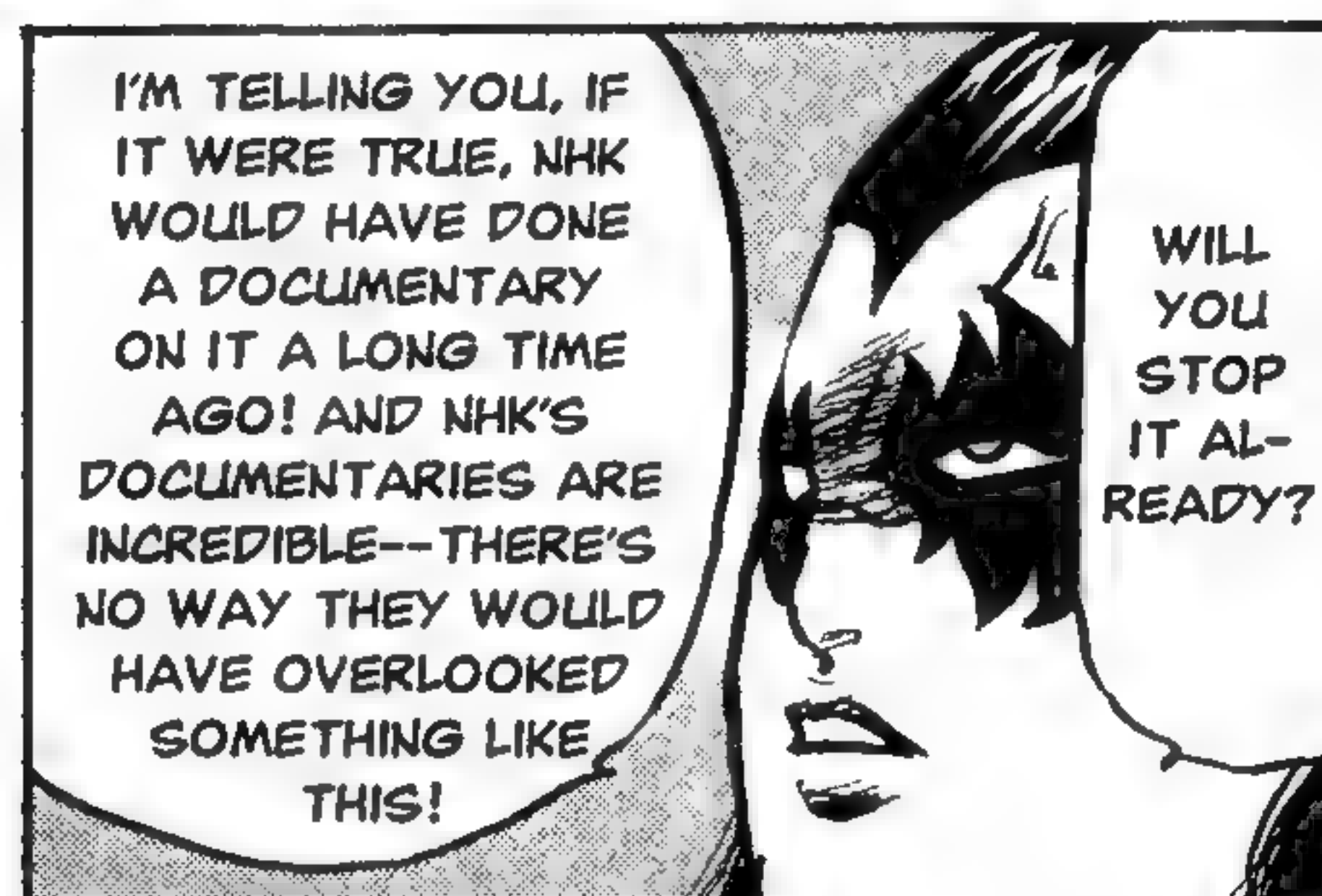
WHETHER OR NOT
YOU KNOW SUMO'S
TERMINOLOGY HAS
GOT NOTHING TO DO
WITH IT. ALL THAT
MATTERS IS GETTING
INTO THAT RING
AND WINNING!







*JAPAN'S PUBLIC BROADCASTING STATION.



In answer to the fervent expectations of a small subset of readers, we present yet another installment of "Love Nona." These dialogues with editor Hayashida are just the thing for hardcore Nonaka fans and those looking for some inside jokes into how editorial departments operate.

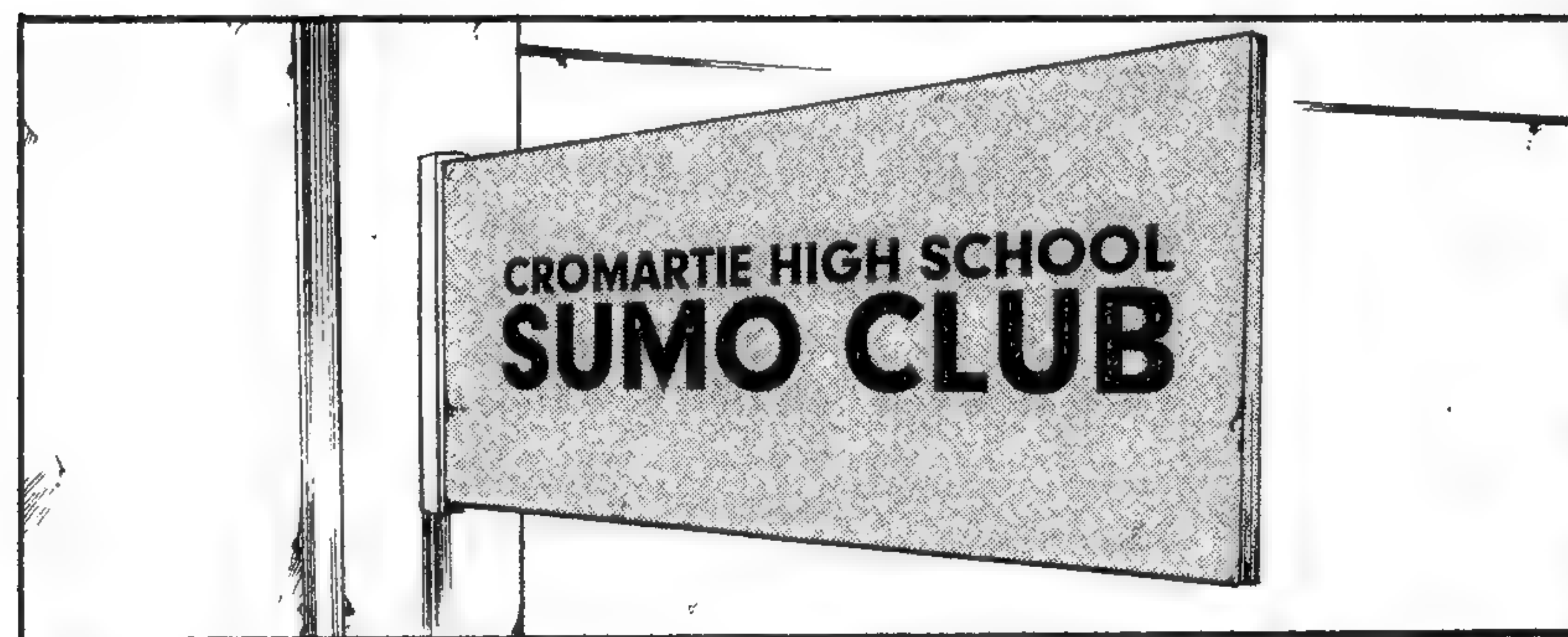


LAST-MINUTE INSERT!
SPECIAL BONUS MANGA
LOVE NONA

Bringing you yet another
controversial story!
(But not how you're thinking.)



NHK HAS HAD ITS SHARE OF SCANDALS, BUT WE
SHOULD STILL PAY OUR SUBSCRIPTION FEES.



A COMMENT ON THIS INSTALLMENT

To give a bit of explanation behind this story, it was drawn in answer to a request for two simultaneous installments of *Cromartie High School* to run in *Weekly Shonen Magazine*.



EDITOR: The editor in chief has asked you to provide two installments for the next issue! Isn't that great!

NONAKA: Huh? No way. It's too much hassle.

EDITOR: What? H-Hold on a minute! Can't you try to be a bit more motivated?

NONAKA: Fine. How about an installment of "Love Nona"?

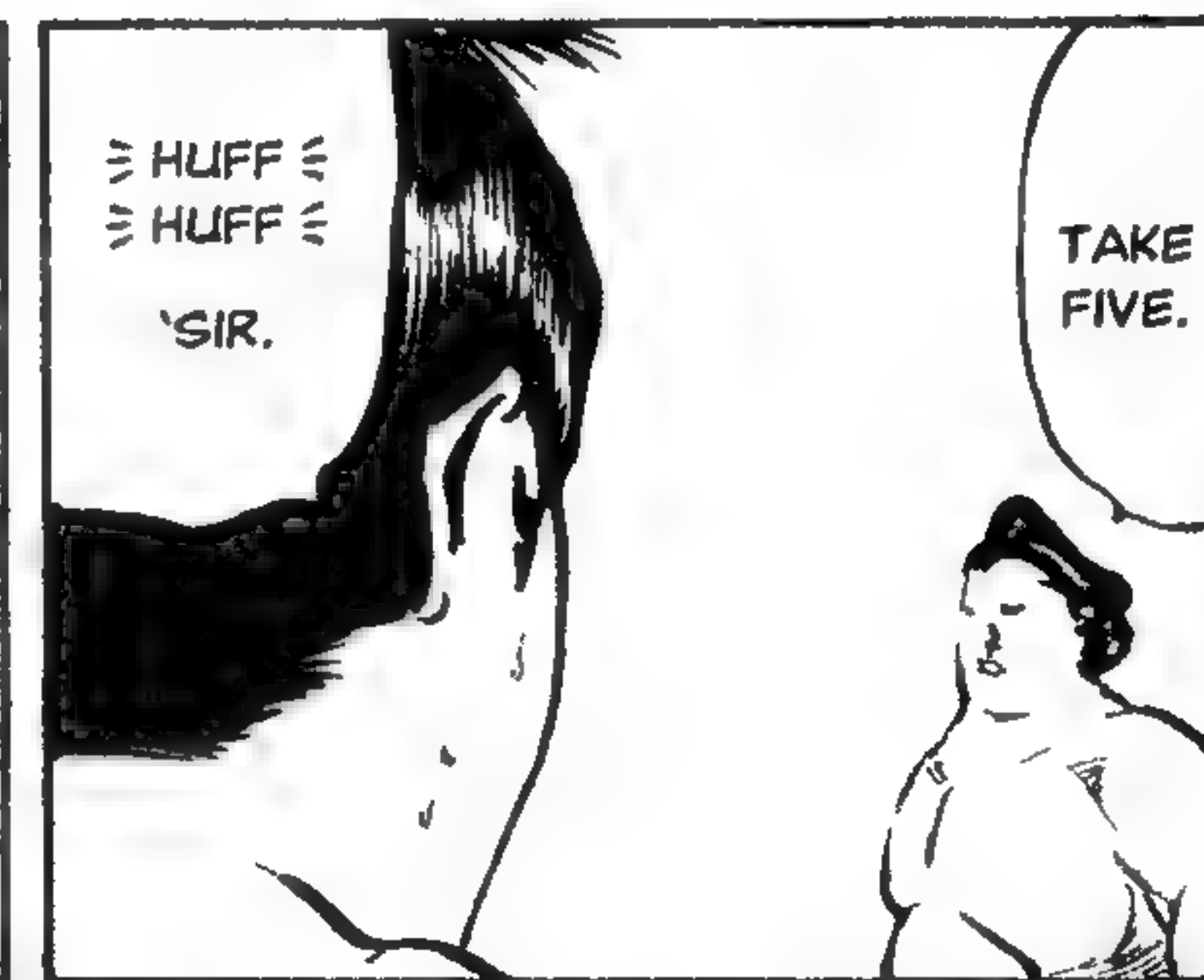
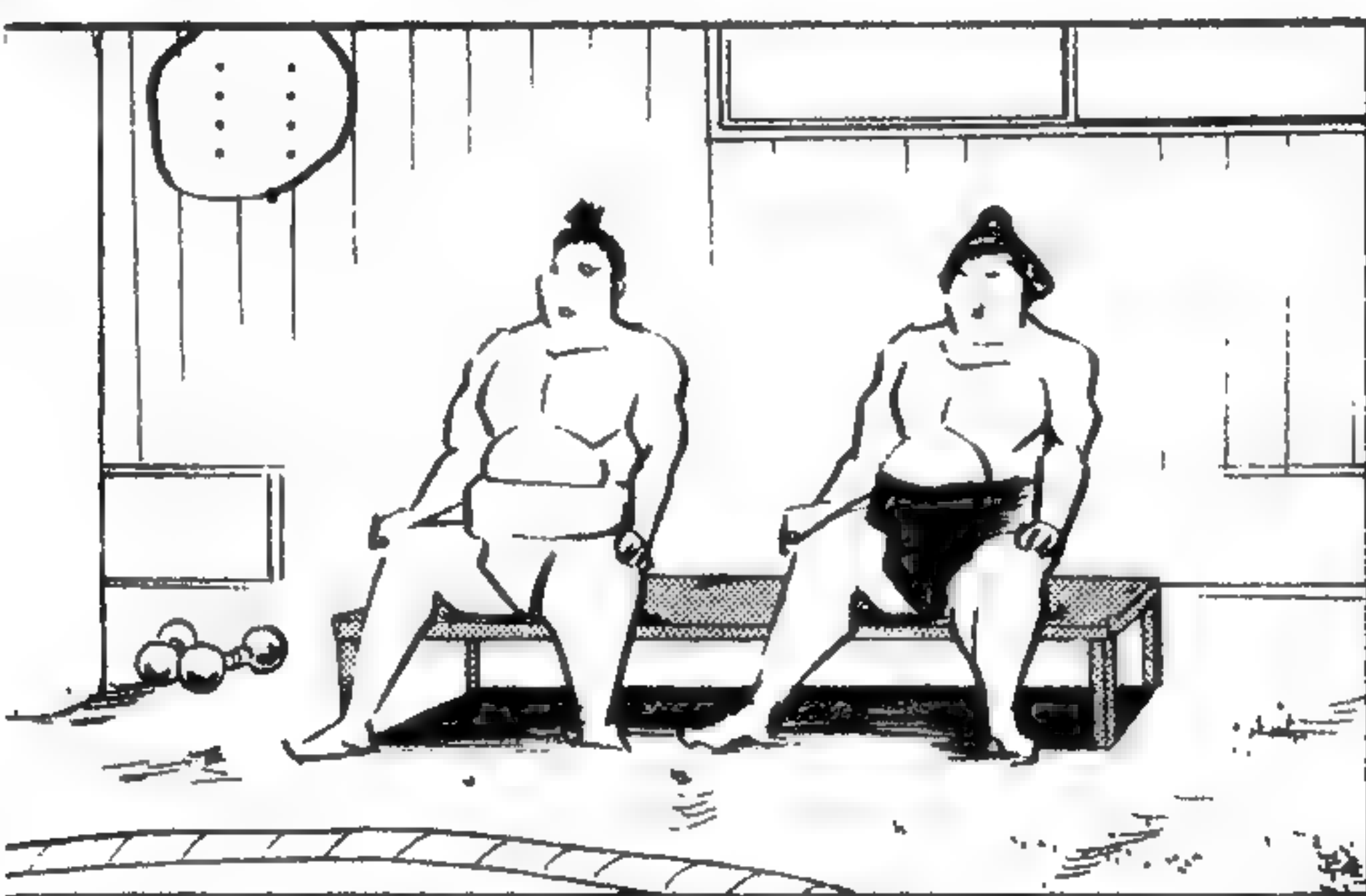
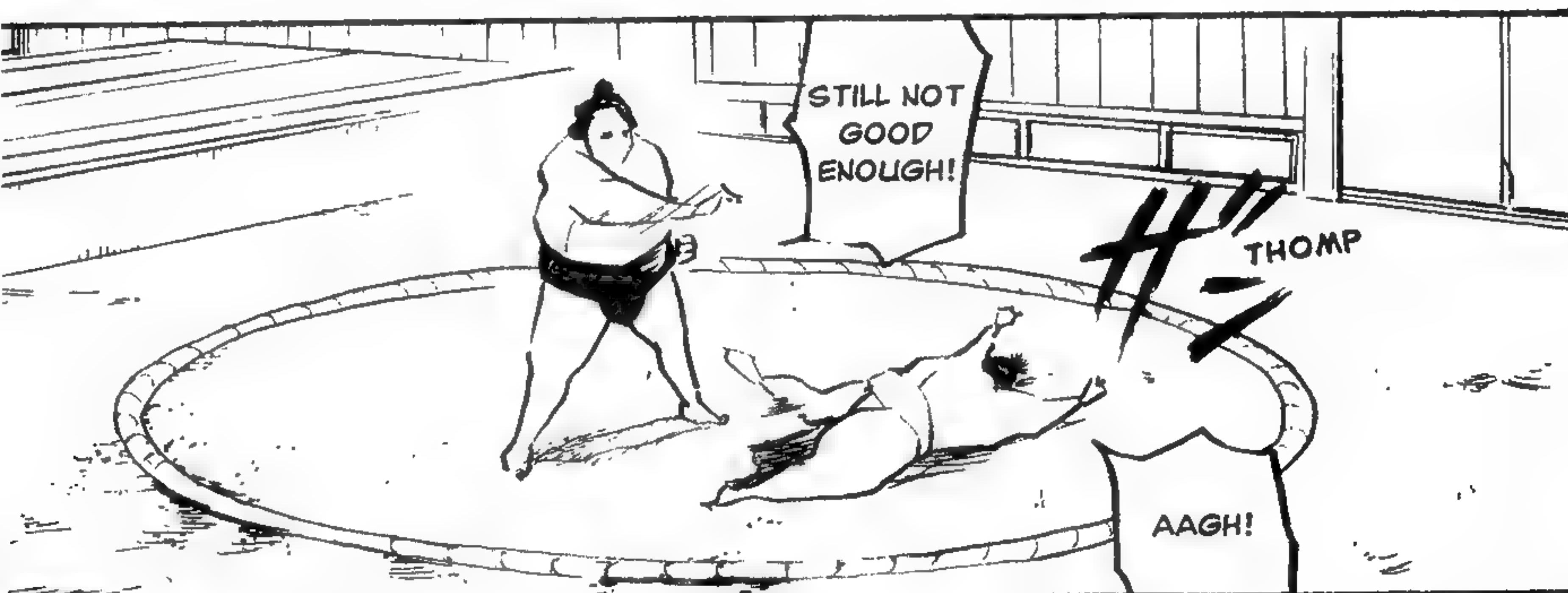
EDITOR: Yes. Please!

And that's how it started, the plan to publish two installments at once. However, it ended up being too much of a pain, and I began a series of clandestine meetings with my editor to come up with a plan to reduce the number of pages. Which of course gives one the feeling that, if there was time to engage in all these meetings, it would have been faster to simply pen the second installment. Then...

"I've got it! Both installments can begin with the same manga!" "Ah! And I wouldn't have to draw the same pages twice!"

Thus, the first three pages of "Love Nona" are exactly the same as those for Chapter 244. Go on, compare them! They're the same! (LOL)

Incidentally, when this was first published in *Shonen Magazine*, it ran directly following Chapter 244. Because that chapter and this installment both began with the same manga, the editorial staff yelled at me, saying, "It just took like a printing error!" Uh...



*AN INTIMIDATING YELL ASSOCIATED WITH SUMO WRESTLERS.





IF YOU DON'T MIND MY ASKING, IS THIS PART OF SOME NEW APPROACH OR OBJECTIVE?



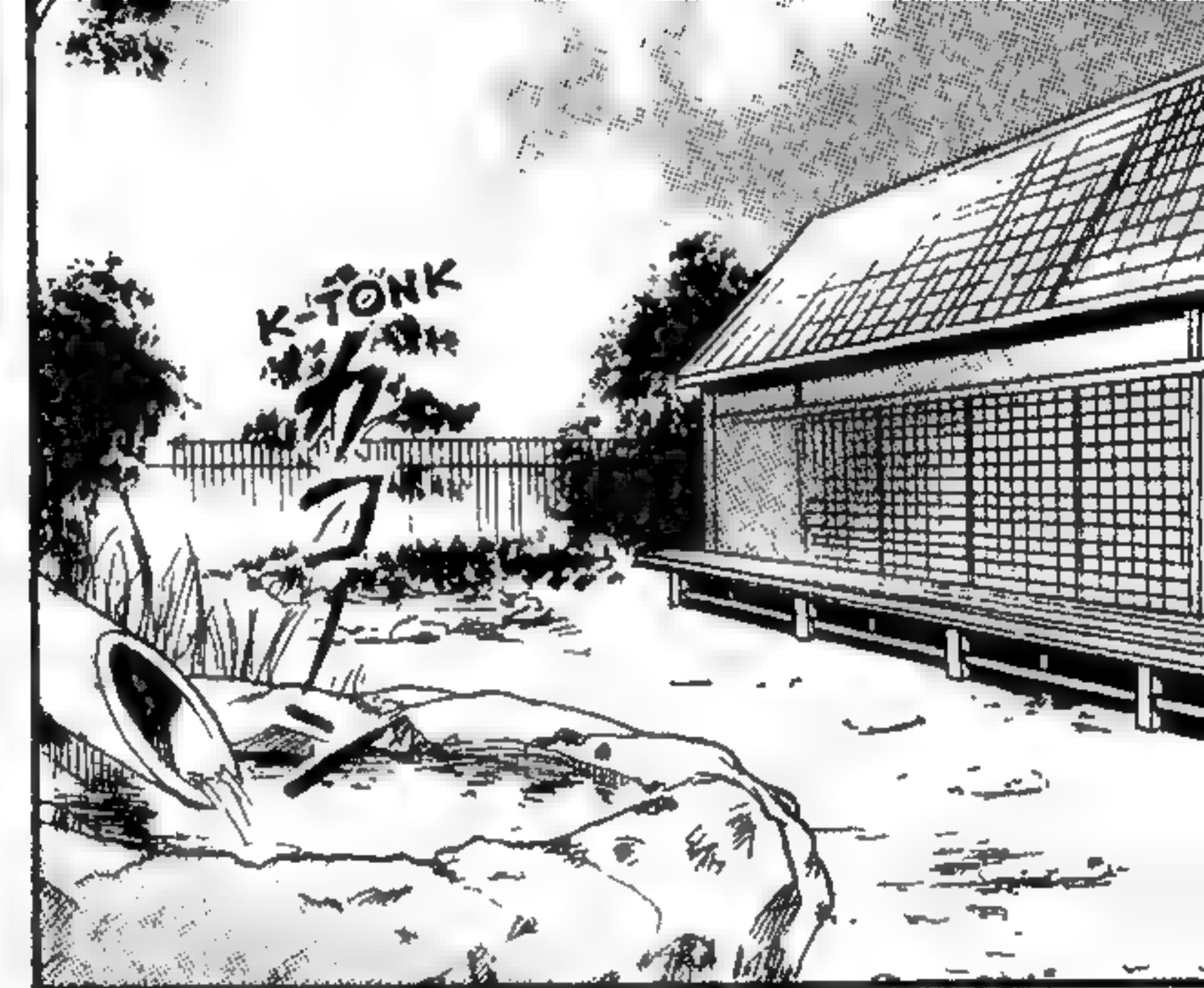
I THOUGHT AS MUCH.

HUH? IT IS EXACTLY THE SAME AS THE LAST ONE.



WELL, HAYASHIDA-KUN? WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT HOW THIS LATEST INSTALLMENT TURNED OUT?

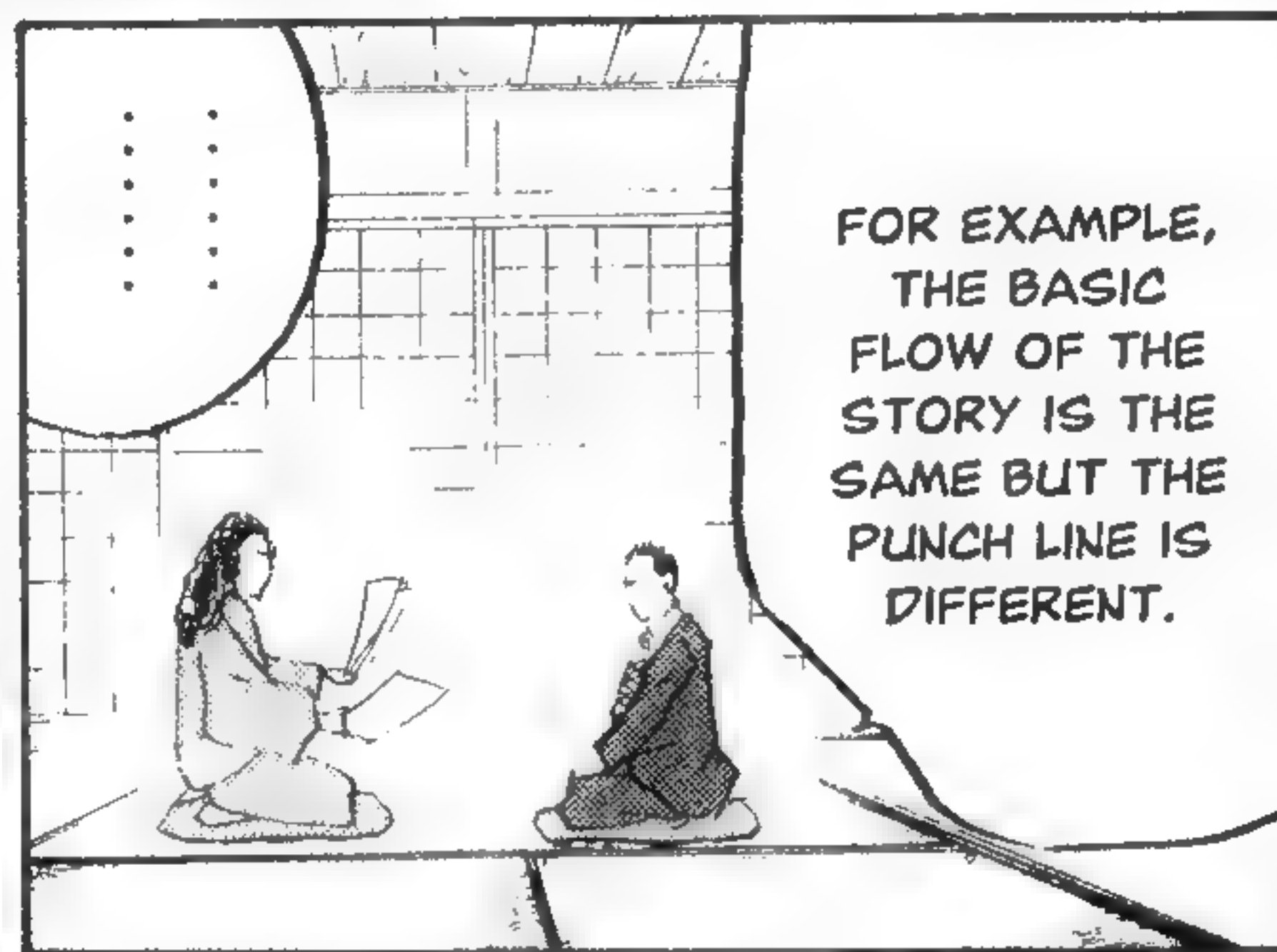
MANGA ARTIST EIJI NONA



NOW WAIT JUST A MOMENT!



NO, THE PUNCH LINE IS THE SAME AS BEFORE, TOO.



FOR EXAMPLE, THE BASIC FLOW OF THE STORY IS THE SAME BUT THE PUNCH LINE IS DIFFERENT.



YES. OR TO PUT IT ANOTHER WAY, I'VE DRAWN THE EXACT SAME INSTALLMENT TWICE IN A ROW.

SO YOU'RE SAYING I'VE RECEIVED THE EXACT SAME INSTALLMENT TWICE IN A ROW?



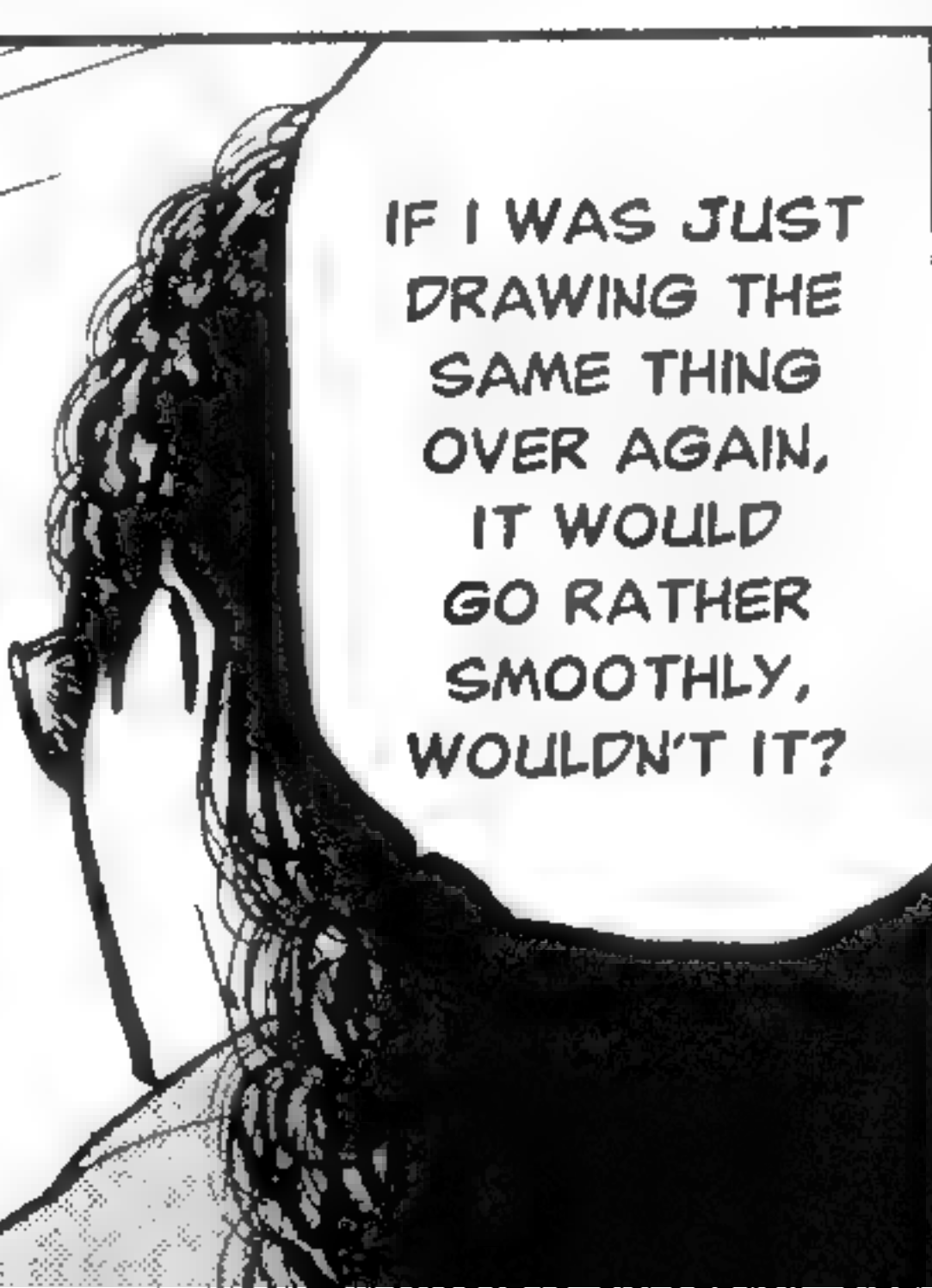
WHAT?

UM, I GET THE FEELING IT'S EXACTLY THE SAME AS THE LAST ONE.

This sumo-related humor.



ENOUGH JOKING, PLEASE.



IF I WAS JUST DRAWING THE SAME THING OVER AGAIN, IT WOULD GO RATHER SMOOTHLY, WOULDN'T IT?



I WAS WONDERING WHY I WAS ABLE TO CRANK IT OUT PRETTY QUICKLY THIS TIME...



HERE.

LET ME SEE THAT.

REALLY? I'M THE GUY THAT'S WRITING THIS STUFF AND EVEN I FORGOT. DON'T YOU THINK THE READERS WILL FORGET, TOO?

NO MATTER HOW YOU LOOK AT IT, THE READERS ARE GOING TO REMEMBER!

BUT TO REPLICATE A STORY YOU DID JUST LAST WEEK? NO, IT SIMPLY CAN'T HAPPEN.

REALLY? STAND-UP COMEDIANS USE THE SAME JOKES OVER AND OVER AGAIN. ISN'T IT THE SAME?

IT CAN'T BE DONE!

USING THE SAME MATERIAL TWICE IS JUST INAPPROPRIATE.

YOU KNOW, YOU'VE GOTTEN DOWNRIGHT HOSTILE LATELY. DON'T YOU THINK YOU COULD DO SOMETHING ABOUT THE ATTITUDE?

WHAT DO YOU MEAN? I'M ALWAYS SERIOUS.

WILL YOU PLEASE TAKE THIS MORE SERIOUSLY?

LISTEN, WE'RE ALL INDIVIDUALS. YOU ARE YOU...

WILL YOU PLEASE STOP SPEAKING FOOLISHNESS?

I DON'T THINK IT SHOULD BE A PROBLEM IF I DO IT, TOO.

WHAT? NO, I'M JUST TRYING TO POINT OUT THINGS TO BE CAREFUL OF. IT'S PART OF MY JOB AS AN EDITOR.

EVERY TIME WE HAVE A MEETING, YOU'RE ALWAYS BUTTING IN WITH COMMENTS LIKE, "YOU'VE USED THAT JOKE BEFORE." IT'S REALLY GETTING ON MY NERVES.

I'VE BEEN DOING SERIAL COMICS FOR ABOUT 10 YEARS NOW.

I KNOW WHERE YOU'RE COMING FROM. I REALLY DO.

STAND-UP COMEDIANS ARE STAND-UP COMEDIANS AND MANGA ARTISTS ARE MANGA ARTISTS.

WITH YOU ALWAYS YAPPING AT ME TO CHANGE THIS AND THAT, YOU COULD ACTUALLY BE CAUSING MY CREATIVE RANGE TO SHRINK!

DON'T YOU EVER THINK YOUR POINTING THINGS OUT COULD HAVE A NEGATIVE EFFECT?

THAT'S TRUE TO A CERTAIN EXTENT. I'M WILLING TO GRANT YOU THAT.

IT CAN'T BE HELPED IF THE SAME KIND OF STORY OCCASIONALLY COMES UP. ACTUALLY, IT'D BE PRETTY STRANGE IF THAT **DIDN'T** HAPPEN.

LOOK, THIS IS WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT. YOUR BIG FLAW IS THAT YOU ALWAYS HAVE TO GO AND SWEAT THE DETAILS. THAT KIND OF BY-THE-NUMBERS ATTITUDE JUST GETS IN THE WAY OF THE CREATIVE PROCESS!

BUT IN EXCHANGE, I WANT YOU TO MAKE THIS ONE A BIT FUNNIER. IT CAN'T BE EXACTLY THE SAME AS BEFORE.

FINE. I'LL LET YOU RUN WITH THE SAME MATERIAL AS LAST TIME.

I HARDLY THINK MAKING IT MORE BORING COULD BE A GOOD THING.

IF ANYTHING, WE COULD MAKE IT EVEN MORE BORING THAN BEFORE.

PERSONALLY, I THINK GOING WITH THE EXACT SAME MATERIAL AS LAST TIME IS JUST FINE.

EVEN IF WE THINK SOMETHING IS BORING, IF IT'S INTERESTING FOR THE READERS, THEN WE'VE SUCCEEDED. THAT'S THE WAY THE WORLD WORKS!

LISTEN, WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT WHAT'S BORING AND WHAT'S NOT?

ALRIGHT, FINE.

JUST LET ME RUN THE INSTALLMENT THE WAY IT IS.

HOW MANY TIMES DO I HAVE TO SAY IT? SOMETHING YOU THINK IS BORING COULD STILL BE INTERESTING FOR THE READERS. AND THAT'S WHAT COUNTS. IT'S NOT LIKE I'M WRITING MANGA TO MAKE **YOU** HAPPY.

BUT AS YOUR EDITOR, I--

I KNOW OF HIM, YES. HE'S GOING THROUGH A SUDDEN SURGE OF POPULARITY RIGHT NOW. HE HAS A LOT OF PROMISE...HIS WORK RUNS IN A DIFFERENT MAGAZINE THOUGH.

SPEAKING OF, DO YOU KNOW AKATSUKA-KUN, THAT NEW COMEDY MANGA AUTHOR?

APPARENTLY, HE USES THE SAME MATERIAL OVER AND OVER AND DOESN'T GIVE IT A SECOND THOUGHT.

I READ AN INTERVIEW WITH HIM NOT LONG AGO...

I THINK HE'S REALLY GOING TO COME INTO HIS OWN. THAT'S JUST MY EDITORIAL INTUITION.

YES. SO IT WOULD SEEM THAT WHEN HE HAS MEETINGS WITH HIS EDITORS, NO ONE MAKES TACTLESS COMMENTS LIKE, "YOU'VE USED THIS MATERIAL BEFORE."

OH, REALLY?

HMM, YOU MIGHT HAVE A POINT. I DO THINK IT'S BEST TO PUT AS FEW RESTRAINTS ON HUMOR AS POSSIBLE... IT SEEMS I'VE BECOME SOMEWHAT OBSTINATE.

IT'S THAT SORT OF EASYGOING MENTALITY THAT'S ALLOWED HIM TO BECOME SO POPULAR. DON'T YOU THINK, HAYASHIDA?

Number of readers
who complained
about this manga:
0 out of 1,000



FIRST OFF,
PLEASE LOOK
AT THE TALLY
WRITTEN ON THE
FRONT OF THE
SHEET.



YOU
DON'T
QUIT, DO
YOU?!



IF THAT'S
THE CASE,
IT'S NO
DIFFERENT
FROM JUST
REPRINTING
YOUR
PREVIOUS
INSTALL-
MENT.



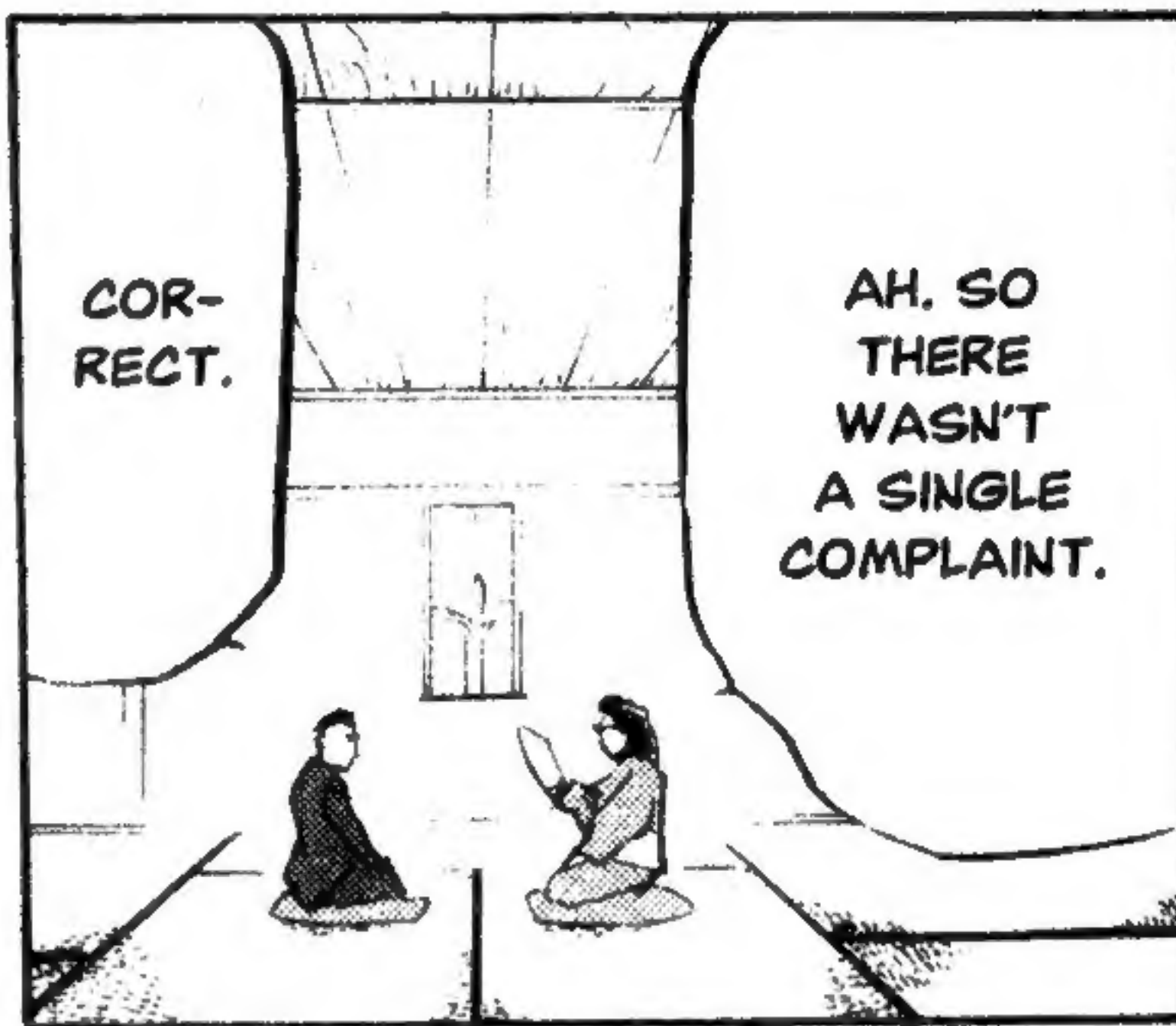
BUT IF WE RUN THIS,
WON'T IT JUST LOOK
LIKE I'VE MADE A
MISTAKE AND RUN
THE SAME THING
TWICE IN A ROW?



Number of readers
who skipped ahead
without reading
this manga:
1,000 out of 1,000



COR-
RECT.



AH, SO
THERE
WASN'T
A SINGLE
COMPLAINT.

RIGHT?



LOOK, JUST
RUN IT! IF YOU
DON'T GET ANY
COMPLAINTS FROM
THE READERS, IT
MEANS THERE'S
NO PROBLEM.



YES, IT IS
AS YOU
SAY.

THIS MANGA
IS RUNNING
IN YOUR
MAGAZINE.
THERE'S GOTTA
BE A PROBLEM
SOMEWHERE,
RIGHT?



I HATE
TO BE
THE
ONE TO
SAY
THIS,
BUT...



COR-
RECT.

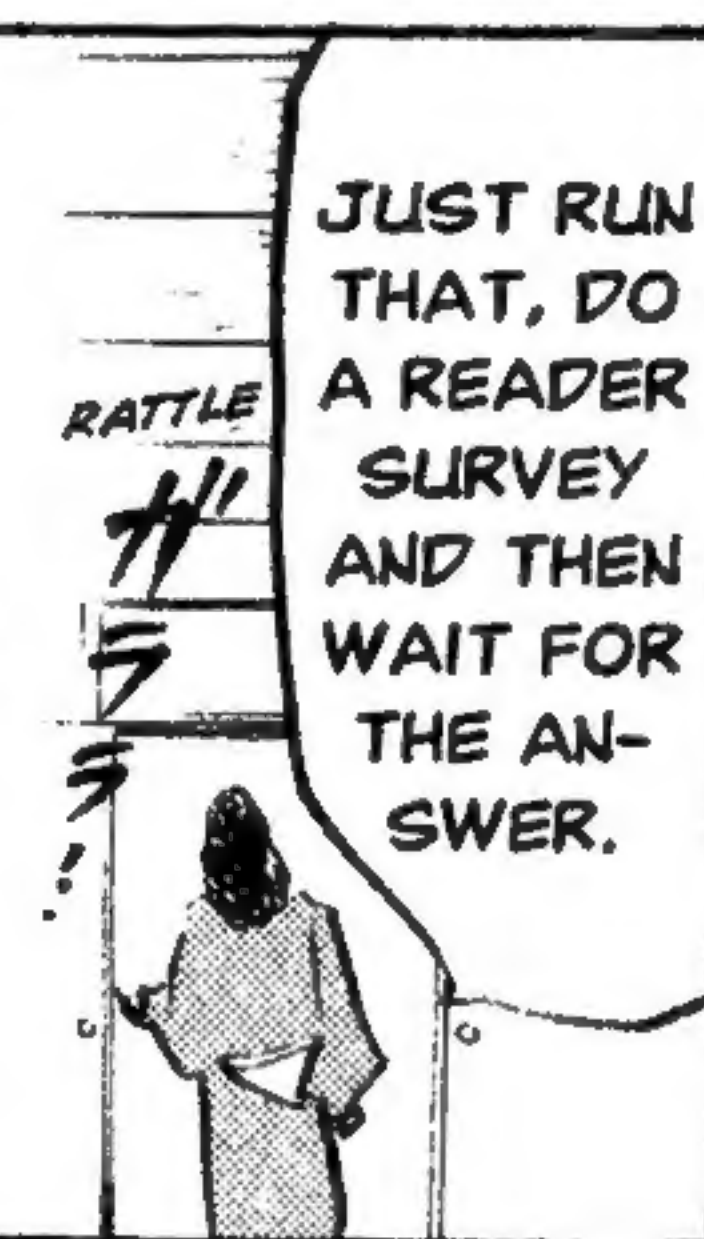


HOLD ON A
MINUTE, YOU
MEAN THERE'S
NOT A SINGLE
PERSON WHO'S
READING THIS?

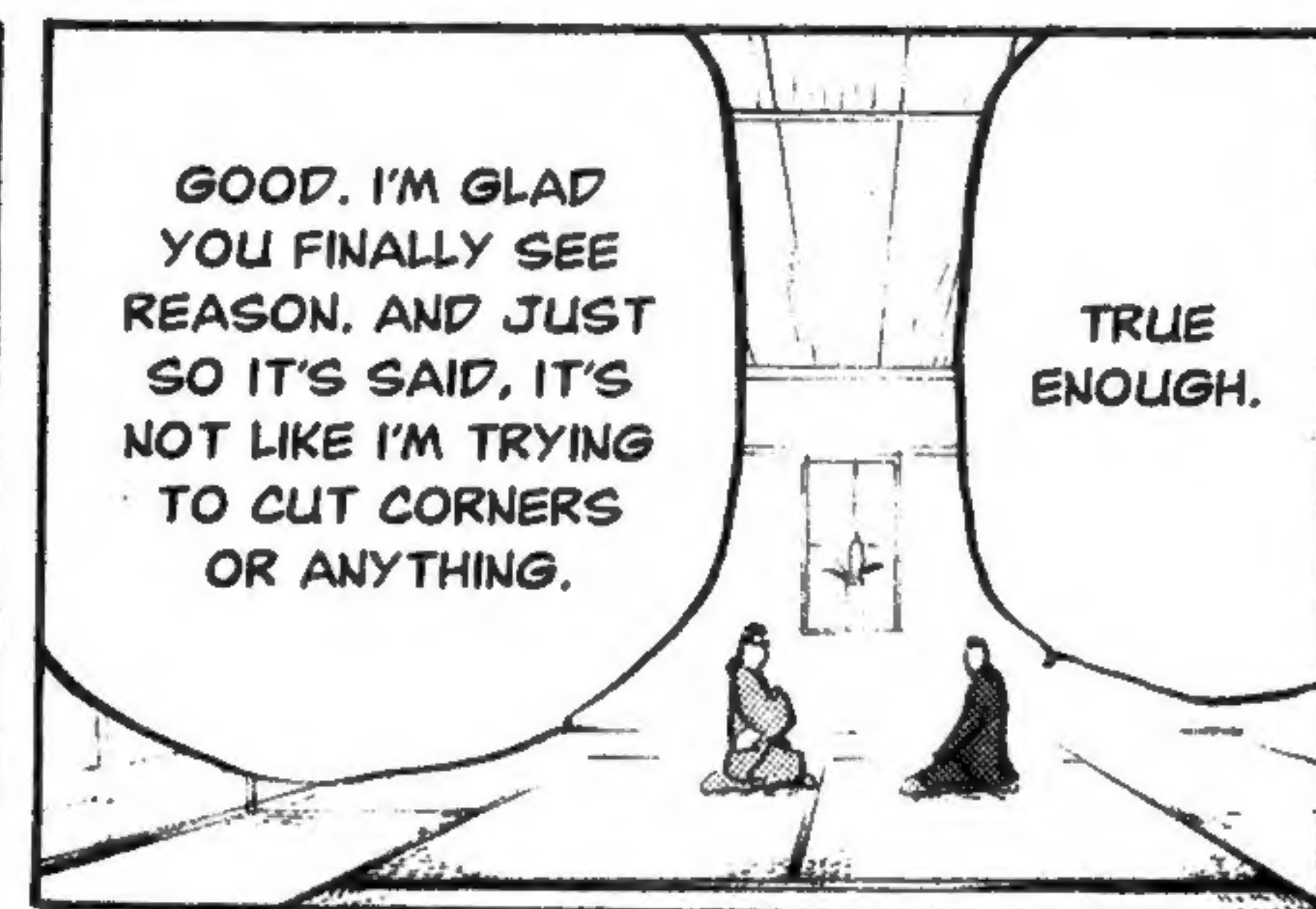
VERY WELL.



JUST RUN
THAT, DO
A READER
SURVEY
AND THEN
WAIT FOR
THE AN-
SWER.



GOOD. I'M GLAD
YOU FINALLY SEE
REASON. AND JUST
SO IT'S SAID, IT'S
NOT LIKE I'M TRYING
TO CUT CORNERS
OR ANYTHING.



TRUE
ENOUGH.

PLEASE DON'T
LET IT GET TO
YOU. WE'LL JUST
TRY HARDER
NEXT TIME.



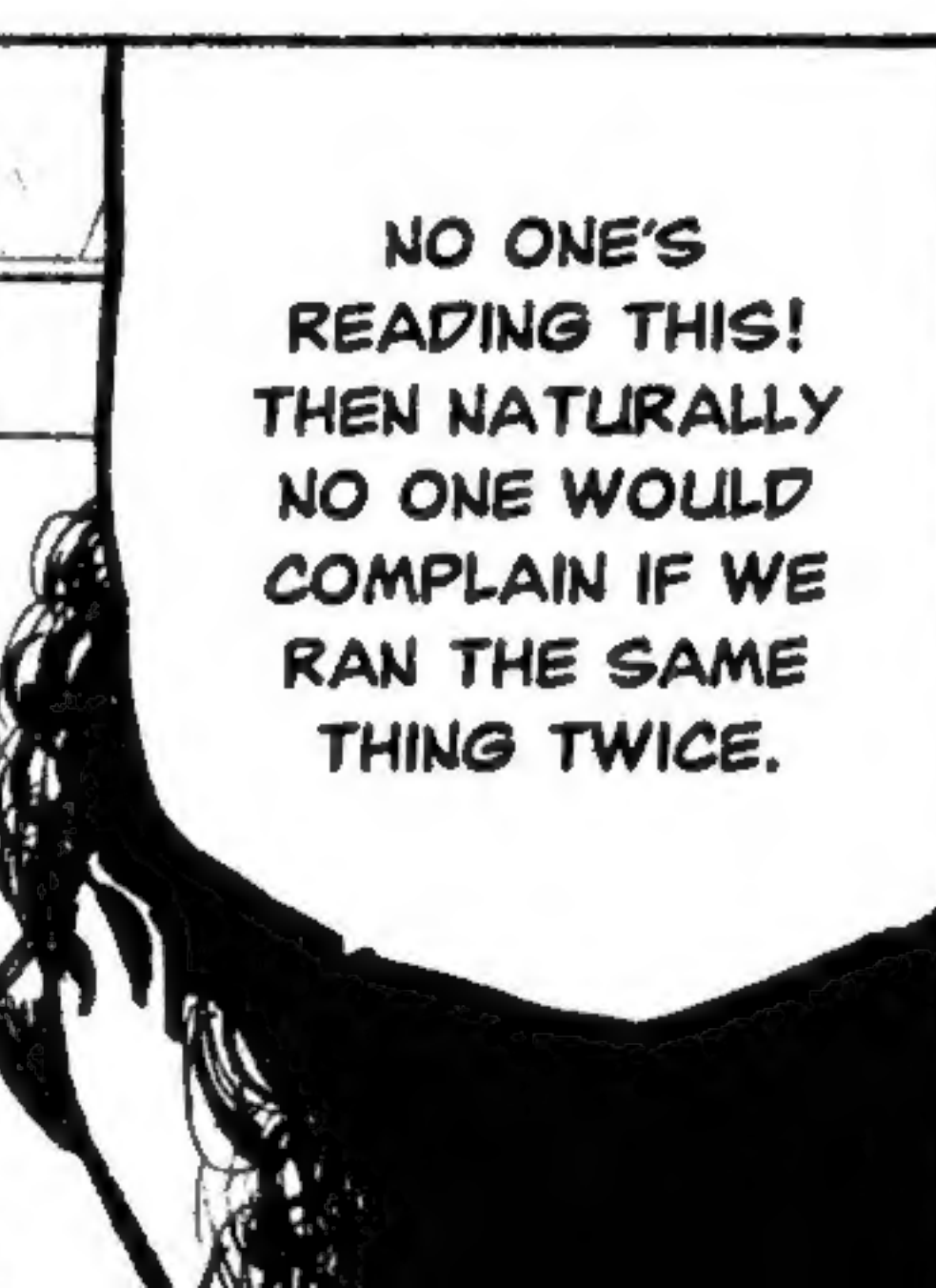
HOW COULD
THINGS
COME TO
THIS?!



I NEVER
DREAMED
THAT WE'D
NOT EVEN
HAVE A
SINGLE
READER...



NO ONE'S
READING THIS!
THEN NATURALLY
NO ONE WOULD
COMPLAIN IF WE
RAN THE SAME
THING TWICE.

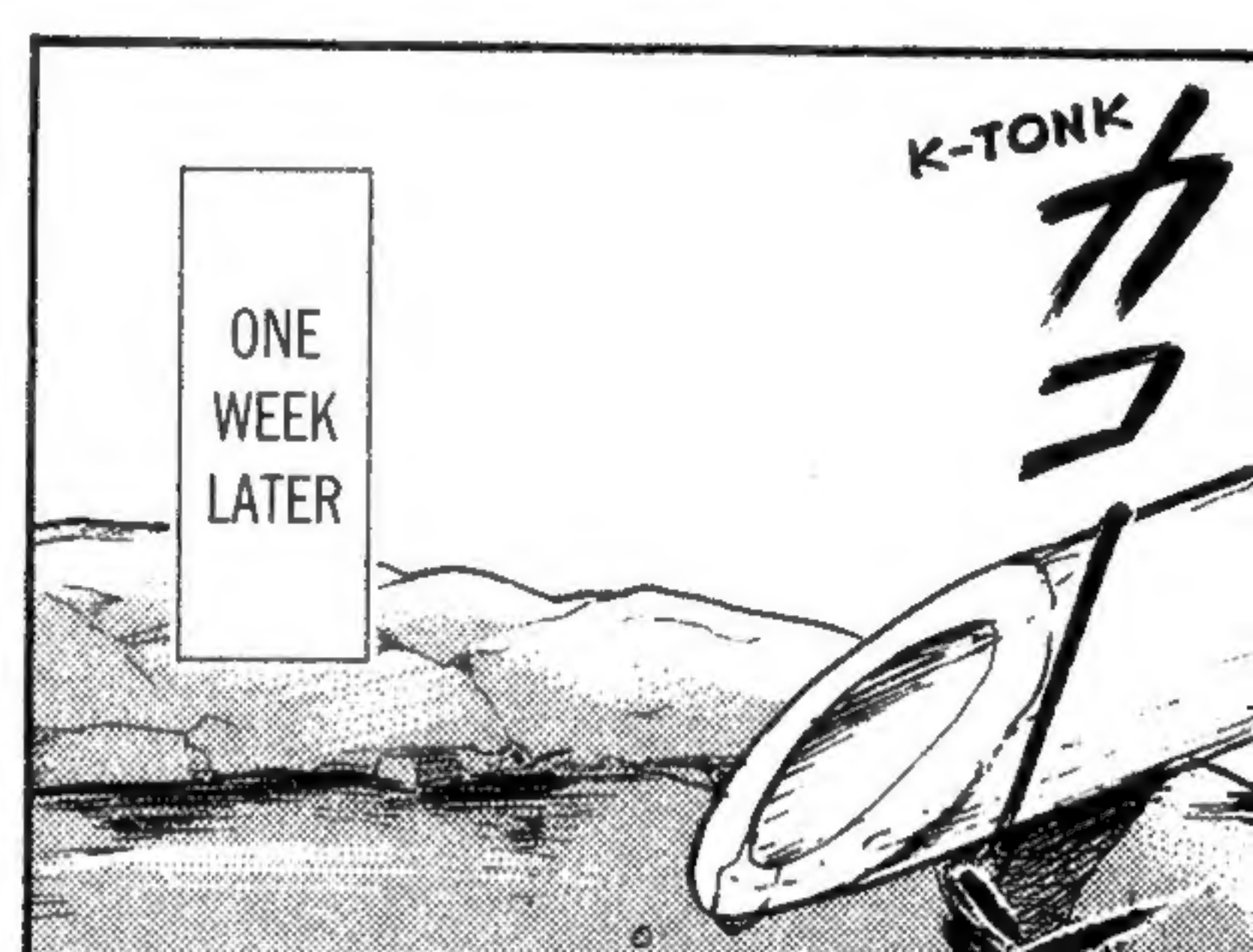


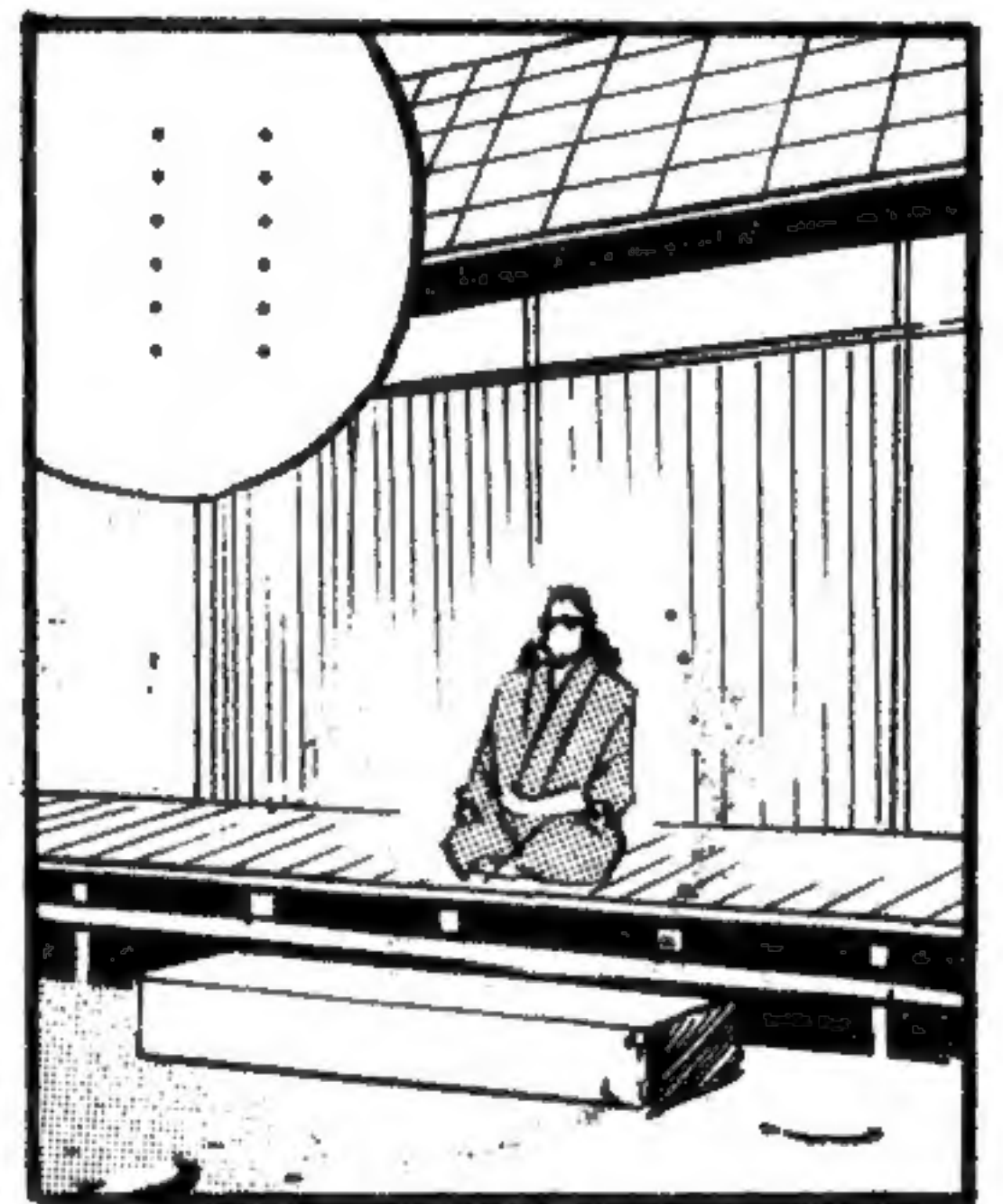
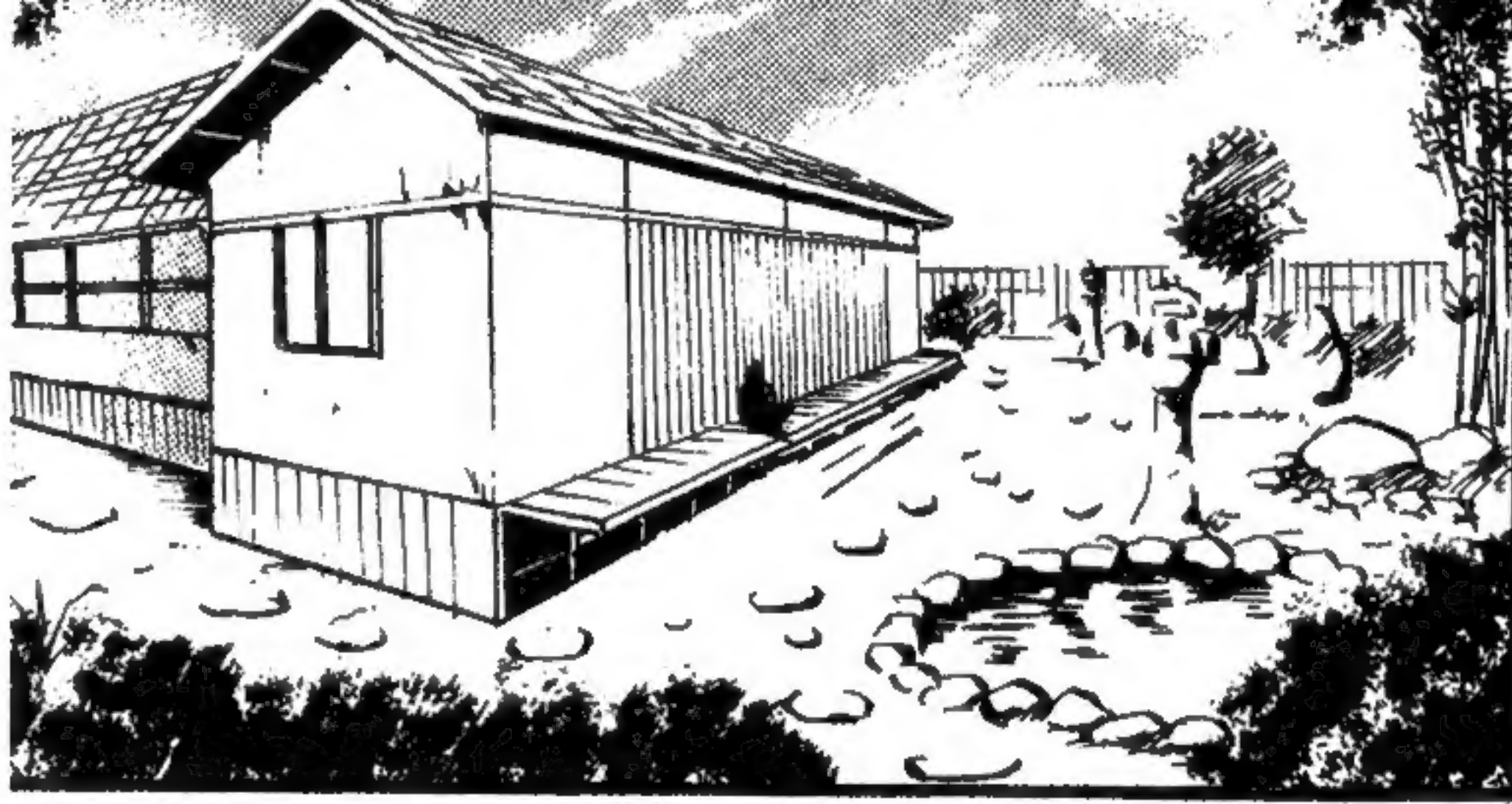
AH.



WE HAVE THE
RESULTS OF
THE READER
SURVEY.

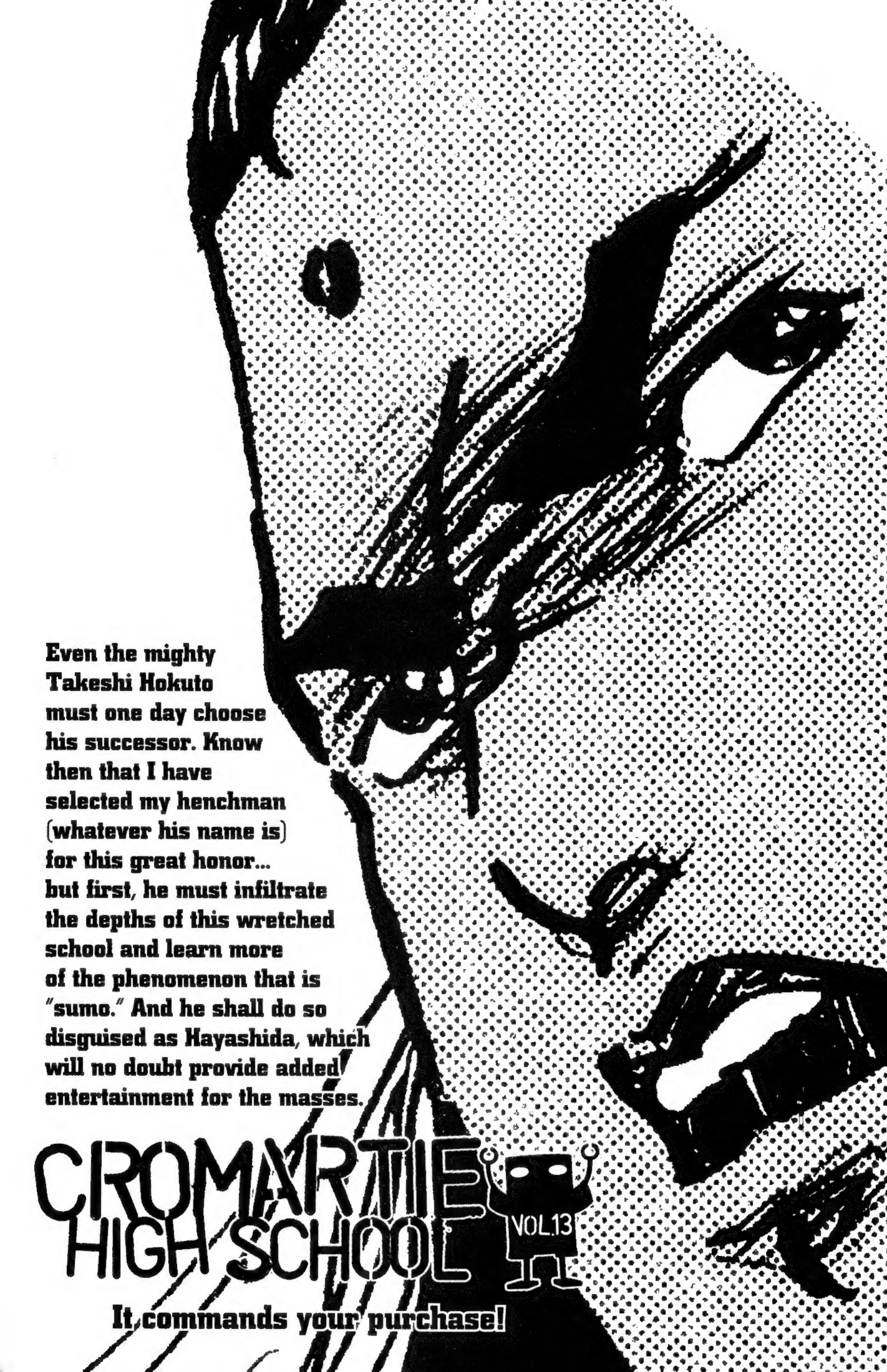
ONE
WEEK
LATER





NO, YOU CAN'T!

THE END



**Even the mighty
Takeshi Hokuto
must one day choose
his successor. Know
then that I have
selected my henchman
(whatever his name is)
for this great honor...
but first, he must infiltrate
the depths of this wretched
school and learn more
of the phenomenon that is
"sumo." And he shall do so
disguised as Hayashida, which
will no doubt provide added
entertainment for the masses.**

CROMARTIE HIGH SCHOOL



It commands your purchase!